
SECURITY
for a
FAILING WORLD

BY
STANWOOD COBB

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Dedicated

*To the great heart of humanity, so prone to
miseries and rancors, yet capable of respond-
ing to the rhythm of universal love and joy.*

P R E F A C E

We are very glad to publish "Security For A Failing World" in England, and wish to thank the author for his generous co-operation. Mr. Cobb is a member of the Bahá'í community of America, and his book was first published there in 1934. This edition is reproduced photographically from the American manuscript, and therefore contains usual American spelling.

The great message, and the practical application of it to world affairs and daily life, which the author indicates, make of this book an important contribution to the development of that new civilization which we all long for.

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PROLOGUE

SECURITY

THE need for economic security is the most urgent requirement of our age.—*Prestonia Mann Martin.*

THE basis of life must be made secure.—*Henry Ford.*

THE cry today is for order, for order and for security, as a refuge for a disorganized, atomized, self-destructive society. It is the desire for order and security which is behind every movement in the world today.—*Dorothy Thompson.*

BOUNDLESS WEALTH

“Man’s inventive genius has placed within mankind’s reach boundless wealth, sufficient for every inhabitant of this planet to enjoy life without encroaching upon supplies of any of his fellows. . . .

“And yet amidst all this abundance, we are undated with myriads of starving, ragged people, all because we have not the intelligence to see that the old economic theories have become fallacies . . .

and that just as our productive methods to which we owe this age of plenty have been revolutionized, so our entire economic system must be reorganized.” —*Arthur Kitson*, British engineer, inventor and economist. *Living Age*, January, 1934.

THE FUTURE OF MANKIND

“Never before was man more powerful, never did he have more mechanical aids, and never was he less able to see what the morrow would bring forth.

. . The violent transformations of our material values and of our economic life have found no corresponding developments in respect to new political and moral creations. We look for some kind of redemption. We yearn for new values that will make life worth living. . . .

“You ask what recipe I would recommend. Well, my own private recipe is that we must make every effort not to do anything that could increase the suffering in the world—and at the same time we must try to make the distance that separates men and beasts as wide as possible.”—*Paul Valery*, *Living Age*, November, 1933.

THE NEW CAPITALISM

“Capitalism itself is not a static concept. It, too, can evolve, is evolving. If it has its faults, it has demonstrated also that it has its virtues. Certainly

under capitalism alone has the paradox we have been considering [want in the midst of plenty] ever existed. Up to the present, depressions have been characterized by *want in the midst of want*. This depression is characterized by *want in the midst of plenty*. Plenty is the new factor. If capitalism has been responsible for the want, it is also responsible for the plenty. To change scarcity into potential abundance has been a tremendous feat. Capitalism has achieved it. To make abundance permanent, to distribute it more equitably, are steps that could not even be considered until the fight against scarcity has been won.

"Chronic insufficiency has been changed to actual and potential abundance. All the attitudes which we brought to our economic and social and political thinking have been developed out of a past in which there was not enough to go around. We have outgrown that past. We must begin to think with reference to new actualities."—From "*Compulsory Spending*," by Julius F. Stone, Jr., *Relief Administrator for the State of Florida*.

THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

"The spiritual powers of the human heart are the only powers which are destined to banish and exterminate selfishness and greed, hatred and fear, from the soul of man. But who can arouse these dormant powers of the human heart and develop their irresistible force? Not the scientists and engi-

neers, the leaders of the physical world. We must have similar leaders in the spiritual world. It is the highest mission of our civilization to find and to train such leaders and to aid them in their gigantic task of delivering the soul of man from the demons of materialism. The family and the school, the college and the university, and above all the church are called upon to carry the burdens of this sacred mission. They will receive every aid which science and engineering can give and are already giving today. This is my Message from Science."—*Michael Pupin, Scribners, May, 1933.*

THE IMPOTENCE OF STATESMANSHIP

"Humanity, whether viewed in the light of man's individual conduct or in the existing relationship between organized communities and nations, has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and statesmen—however disinterested their motives, however concerted their actions, however unsparing in their zeal and devotion to its cause. No scheme which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise; no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance; no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built.

"No appeal for mutual tolerance which the worldly-wise might raise, however compelling and insistent, can calm its passions or help restore its vigor. Nor would any general scheme of mere organized international cooperation, in whatever sphere of human activity, however ingenious in conception, or extensive in scope, succeed in removing the root cause of the evil that has so rudely upset the equilibrium of present-day society. Not even, I venture to assert, would the very act of devising the machinery required for the political and economic unification of the world—a principle that has been increasingly advocated in recent times—provide in itself the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigor of organized peoples and nations.

"Little wonder if one of Europe's pre-eminent thinkers, honored for his wisdom and restraint, should have been forced to make so bold an assertion: *'The world is passing through the gravest crisis in the history of civilization.'* *'We stand,'* writes another, *'before either a world catastrophe, or perhaps before the dawn of a greater era of truth and wisdom. It is in such times,'* he adds, *'that religions have perished and are born.'*

"Might we not already discern, as we scan the political horizon, the alignment of those forces that are dividing afresh the continent of Europe into camps of potential combatants, determined upon a contest that may mark, unlike the last war, the end of an epoch, a vast epoch, in the history of human

evolution?—Might it not happen that out of this world eruption there may stream forces of such spiritual energy as shall recall, nay eclipse, the splendor of those signs and wonders that accompanied the establishment of the Faith of Jesus Christ? Might there not emerge out of the agony of a shaken world a religious revival of such scope and power as to even transcend the potency of those world-directing forces with which the Religions of the Past have, at fixed intervals and according to an inscrutable Wisdom, revived the fortunes of declining ages and peoples? Might not the bankruptcy of this present, this highly vaunted materialistic civilization, in itself clear away the choking weeds that now hinder the unfoldment and future efflorescence of God's struggling Faith?"—*Shoghi Effendi, World Leader of the Bahá'í Movement.*

CHAPTER ONE

The New Age of Plenty

A NEW and better order is in the making. Never within the memory of man have human thoughts and actions so universally turned toward the re-forming of the world; toward the creation of better and more stable institutions based on just and humane concepts.

It would seem that for the first time humanity is endeavoring with all its mind and soul to consciously advance its evolution upon this planet, so rich in potency for universal prosperity and happiness yet so indigent and miserable, in the main, because of the lack of a guiding ideal and an ethical statesmanship. Truly the enlightened rulers of the world, like the Athenians of old, are worshiping a god whom they begin dimly to perceive but cannot name—the god that is to further progress, justice, and universal prosperity.

Economists, sociologists, journalists, statesmen—all perceive the desperate need of a “planned society.” And many perceive that it is not possible to plan for each individual country independently of the rest of the world. In other words, as Sir Edgar Saltus has stated, a *world plan is imperative*.

“But how is such a world plan possible?” queries an editorial writer in the *New York Times*. “Such a plan assumes a perfect planner, and where is the

person, or where are the persons, gifted with such super-human powers as to evolve a perfect plan for humanity?" Secondly, this editor points out, the effectiveness of any world plan depends upon absolute and undivided acceptance of, and obedience to, this plan. There can be no wavering of allegiance to other competitive plans. And how can it be expected that any plan, even the best plan proposed, can succeed in so dominating world opinion?

There are, it is true, very intelligent planners at work in this country, endeavoring to evolve a new structure for humanity. Many of the ideas they are evolving and putting into practice seem good and destined to persist in whole or in part. On the other hand, many of their ideas seem questionable—certainly give no indication of omniscience. And when we come to the gravest problem of all—that of the unqualified adherence and unquestioned loyalty of all humanity to these or any plans proposed—we see that we are confronted with an insuperable obstacle to that "planned society" of which all forward-looking people are now dreaming.

2

"The problem of statesmanship is to mould a policy leading toward a higher state of humanity," declared Secretary of Agriculture Wallace in a recent address before the Federal Council of Churches. "True statesmanship and true religion therefore

have much in common." And he went on to picture a nation controlled by spiritual principles, and denied the claims of those who contend that greed and profit seeking are the mainsprings of human conduct.

"But it will be impossible to enter into the still almost limitless possibilities of science and invention until we have acquired a new faith, a faith which is based on a richer concept of the potentialities of human nature than that of the economists, scientists, and business men of the nineteenth century. . . . *The religious keynote, the economic keynote, the scientific keynote of the new age must be the overwhelming realization that mankind now has such mental and spiritual powers and such control over nature that the doctrine of the struggle for existence is definitely outmoded and replaced by the higher law of cooperation.*"

In general it is the function of government to execute and administer the existing order of things. But today governments the world over are being forced by the compelling power of circumstance to attempt to create some new order of things which will establish stability and security in the midst of this failing civilization.

The system of unlimited profit seeking and competition necessarily creates a struggle for existence as brutal in the economic world as is the biological struggle for existence in the jungle. It has seemed that this struggle for existence is a necessary or inevitable part of human evolution, as it is indeed in the lower forms of life.

To a certain extent this is true. Undoubtedly superior human beings, in whatever line of human enterprise, will rise to the top. But that men need to struggle selfishly and cruelly merely in order to gain an existence is no longer true, thanks to the efficacy of modern science and to the immense resources of our planet. When cooperation supercedes selfish and unlimited competition, there will be plenty for all.

This truth is evident, viewed from any standpoint, when we realize that today more food is being produced in this country, and more goods manufactured, than can be consumed by the populace. It takes no stretch of the imagination to conceive that a more cooperative organization of society can provide all the necessities and many comforts for the entire populace.

This is easy to state, but it is not easy to bring to pass. And why? Because the immensely selfish egoism which is a part of human nature intervenes. There are those who, for purposes of luxury and power, want more than their normal share of life's goods. And unfortunately those who have such selfish desires are apt also to be strongest in intelligence, will power, cunning, and ruthlessness.

3

The amazing paradox implied in the present world economic crisis is that the chief cause of the present economic depression—the power of machin-

ery to do the work of man—can be made the foundation of universal prosperity.

It is not possible that humanity properly organized can suffer economically from the magic productive power of technology whether employed in the manufacture of goods or in the raising of agricultural products. Human ingenuity and human labor applied to the production of the necessities, comforts, and luxuries of life—multiplied a thousand-fold by the advantages of machine power—can only be a blessing to the human race, provided results of such industrial and agricultural enterprise be properly distributed.

The above statement is axiomatic. The clue to world prosperity lies in the problem of distribution. This truth is so evident as to need no argument. But how to create and firmly establish the proper and necessary modes of distribution is another problem, calling for a different type of thinking than that which made multiple production possible. It calls for a new social conscience, a new type of cooperative, organized endeavor. This is the crux of the whole problem. Unless these requirements can be attained by humanity the machine will be a curse instead of a blessing, for it will simply increase the power of the few to exploit the many.

The difficulty in organizing humanity along new social and economic lines is due to the fact that humanity is made up of different types of individuals, some of whom are cooperative and unselfish by na-

ture while others are extremely individualistic, self-seeking, and exploitive.

In the animal world these two opposite types do not exist in some species. Some variety of animals and many varieties of insects live on a cooperative basis, the interests of the individual being merged in the interests of the group and the group serving as a means of protection and resource to the individual; while other predatory types of animals like the wolf and tiger are individualistic. But in humanity we find these two types mingled, "the predatory and the pacific, the individualist and the socialist, the self-sufficient and the associative."¹

4

Here is a grave problem which confronts any attempt to organize humanity along truly cooperative lines. Side by side we find individuals who are predatory by nature and individuals who are cooperative by nature. The existence of these two variant and opposite types in the same mass presents grave obstacles to the proper organization of humanity. Worse still is the fact that the predatory type is fiercer, more aggressive, more subtle, more unhindered by conscience or by strict sense of justice than is the cooperative type. When to these qualities are added the advantages of a keen intellect, a powerful physique, and a strong nervous organism we have a situation which is as difficult to manage for the inter-

¹ J. Arthur Thompson, "Ways of Living."

ests of the many as were the battles of the Middle Ages where physical giants of knighthood fully armored and riding armored steeds could easily prevail against masses of unarmored and poorly armed peasant infantry.

As for those intellectual leaders of humanity who are aware of the imperative need of a cooperative form of society, how are they going to succeed in sequestering the predatory type or in subordinating it to the general welfare while at the same time permitting necessary individual enterprise, invention, and progress?

The power of present government is not sufficient to accomplish this. The constant evasions of law on the part of the shrewd and powerful, the constant corruption of government through largess and bribery make democracy ineffectual to control the will of the exploitive type. And a dictatorship, while it may prevail for the moment, is only as effective as the life of the dictator; at his death all may be undone, since in a dictatorship everything hangs upon the will of one individual and not upon the development of the plebiscite.

We must search with desperate zeal for a power capable of solving this critical situation. Exploitation magnified a thousandfold by the potency of machinery will with its titanic force destroy humanity itself unless an immediate solution is found.

We have seen that the solution cannot be found within the field of economics itself, and that only partial solution can be found within the field of

politics. Where shall we turn then but to the field of religion, which in its most potent periods is capable of exerting a force greater than all other forces that move upon the human heart and will?

5

Religion is strong enough to harness even the predatory to common ends. It operates in two ways: first, in raising human nature to higher levels so that a large proportion of the exploitive type are sublimated into types of voluntary service; secondly, in establishing an ethics so clear-cut and definite and final that the percentage of those who remain predatory are not able with all their subtlety and force of persuasion or aggressiveness to corrupt the standards and requirements of the age. Thus it is that religion, in its periods of greatest power, has always succeeded in organizing human groups into cooperative, gracious and successful forms of economic and social living. This successful organization has persisted as long as the dynamic power of religion was great enough to hold ethical standards strongly to the front and create as heroes in the eyes of communities the men of greatest service instead of the men of greatest exploitation.

This is just what is needed today, a renaissance of religion, a clean breath sweeping from infinite heights to purify the world conscience; to show right as right and wrong as wrong; to remove indefiniteness and confusion from the consciousness of man;

to give an imperial divine authenticity to righteous modes of living, whether in the life of the individual or in the life of economic and political communities. There need to be heroes who stand for the right with all the power of their being and with the added power that comes to them from the Unseen.

There needs to be a growing moral conviction on the part of the populace; a clear understanding of what is socially, economically, and politically right and wrong; a burning fire of zeal; a steadfast allegiance to principles of divine truth and guidance; a faith in and obedience to those hero leaders who on the plane of unselfish service seek to guide humanity into successful ways of corporate living.

The populace must be deaf to the siren calls of iniquitous self-advancement and of greedy gain; rather must their ears be open to the voice of justice, of charity, of mutual consideration.

6

It is within the bounds of reason to aver that unless humanity speedily replaces egoistic, aggressive, and cruel qualities with cooperative and serviceable qualities (at least in the type of men who control affairs in all departments of human activity) civilization is doomed. For the forces of obstruction and destruction grow in geometric ratio with the progress of man's intelligence, his inventive capacity, and his science of control over the resources and powers of nature.

There must needs be a planned society, world wide in its scope, cooperative in its foundations and principles, scientific in its development and distribution of produced wealth, and non-exploitive in its administration.

Unless such a world state comes about, society will wreck itself in titanic struggles for supremacy on the part of this group or that, this nation or that. The battle of the possessed against the dispossessed, of nations rich in resources against those in need of them, of those countries who seek to maintain positions of advantage against those seeking to rise to power,—this immense world-wide contest cannot chronically persist. The means of destruction are too great, the scope of attack too vast to confine strife within such minor bounds as to injure only a part of humanity.

Today we all have to sink or swim together. What happens in the Antipodes affects us no less than what happens next door. We are therefore compelled, for the first time in history, to think in world terms and to make plans that are universal in their scope.

7

Out of this very necessity—this “ANANKE” which compels events—will come tremendous progress and transformation. I do not apprehend that either humanity or Destiny will fail in the crisis. That which is necessary will be brought to pass.

Humanity will rise to new heights both of concept and of action. The creative force of gifted and truly patriotic souls, forging new folk-ways within each nation, will eventually flow together and coalesce as a *world power* of totally new type—a directive, constructive, conserving power that will build and not destroy, that will distribute and not preempt, that will stabilize and not endanger the structure of civilization.

With the enormous creative power of modern science fully available to agricultural and industrial production the world over, with improved and cheaper modes of locomotion, with the expansion of all means of international communications, and with the advancing coalescence of world cultures, we may reasonably look forward to *an age of universal prosperity and happiness* such as philosophers have dreamed and poets sung of.

We are only at the dawn of the power age. The application of electricity to the arts of life is but in its kindergarten stage, if we may take the word of the scientists.

And who knows what new universal and titanic power awaits discovery? Whether this be the power of the atom or an electric force to be derived from the atmosphere—there is destined to be such a discovery within the present century. All over the world scientists are striving to wrest this gigantic secret that would double, treble, expand to an unknown degree the wealth of the world.

Recent investigations point to the stratosphere as

the source of this new power. Scientists have discovered that the world is a huge dynamo, with the earth and its heavy atmosphere the negative field and the stratosphere the positive field. In that outer atmosphere, it is computed, there is kinetic electricity of 200 million amperes, *enough to provide 160 million horsepower for every human being on earth.*

"Science is on the verge," says Dr. Luther S. H. Gable, "of unleashing forces capable of lifting mankind to heights beyond the wildest dreams of a generation ago, or of plunging humanity into an orgy of destruction which might well depopulate and leave barren the civilized world."

The next kind of power that will be discovered will be not only more universally available but also cheap beyond all present expectation. It will lessen the cost of transportation. Air travel will be so low in cost that trips around the world will be within the means of the average person. Structural metal will be infinitely lowered in cost by the application of this new power to the production of aluminum alloys from the almost exhaustless supplies of aluminum clay in which the earth's crust abounds. Agriculture will be stimulated and enriched by cheap nitrogen fertilizer² obtained at little cost from the earth's atmosphere by means of this new power. .

Toil, as mankind has hitherto known it, will be a thing of the past. A small amount of labor per capita will produce goods enough to satisfy all human needs and desires. A new leisure will ensue

²Nitrogen composes 70% of our atmosphere!

which will raise the dignity of the working man and make possible the complete democratization of culture.

But humanity, in order to utilize and profit by such an age of plenty, must undergo a spiritual transformation.

8

The history of power up to date has been a history of exploitation more than of service. The few have grown enormously rich out of all proportion to justice or expediency. The power already discovered has not been divided in proportionate blessings among the human family. If a vast new power were to be discovered while humanity is organized socially, economically, and politically on the old individualistic selfish basis, the process of human exploitation would be aggravated rather than diminished. Instead of a blessing, such a power would prove a curse; for it would engender class warfares, and disrupt rather than enhance the order and stability of civilization.

More dangerous still would such a power prove in the field of nationalistic rivalry and warfare. The power sources we already have on hand are so destructive as to menace the very existence of civilization. Added power would prove to be but added ruin if the old competitive nationalistic system were to continue—with its exploitation in the name of patriotism, its selfish monopolizing of earth's re-

sources, and its fanatical and unreasoning belligerency.

Furthermore there is a distinct danger to civilization in the opportunities which added leisure would give for the satisfaction of greed, vanity, luxury-desires, and sensuality. The new age of plenty and of leisure will prove a temptation far too great for humanity to endure, unless there comes simultaneously with it a process of spiritualization to refine man's desires and habits.

What humanity desperately needs more than new sources of power, more than leisure or prosperity, is a new conscience. When that arrives, man's intelligence and man's will can forge a way to a general level of prosperity not only far greater than human hope has envisaged, but also eternally durable.

Philosophers, economists, statesmen—with a zeal enforced by necessity—are seeking today security for a failing world. The solution to their quest must be found chiefly in a new universal moral and spiritual consciousness of brotherhood applied in practical terms to the organization of human society.

CHAPTER II

Is the Intelligence of Man Capable of Creating a Stable Civilization?

THE intellect of man, conquering the earth through the power of science, seemed but a few years ago to assure humanity a secure and ever-advancing civilization. World peace and worldwide technological progress indicated the early realization of prosperity and security for every individual.

How much all this now seems a dream of the past! Today there is no security anywhere, either political or economic; and prosperity is in such difficult hiding that the economists and statesmen of the world are unable to discover clues to its reappearance.

In the memory of living man there has never been a time so fraught with political strife and overturn. Internal disorders in more than half the countries of the world are aggravated by menaces of international strife. Europe is a house divided against itself, liable at any moment to another Armageddon more dreadful than the last. Asia is full of storm clouds. And between the Orient and Occident goes on a struggle never ending of Oriental revolt against Occidental imperialism.

Economically the world is in universal disaster. Everywhere are unemployment, poverty, and a breakdown of the normal processes of industrial and

commercial life. National currencies have been almost universally depreciated. The gold standard has met with world-wide defeat. And at a time when the world imperatively needs a healthy international flow of goods, the rise of nationalistic tariffs opposes to international trade greater obstacles than have existed since the Middle Ages.

2

Why is it that man—with his superb intellect, his amazing scientific abilities, his powerful technological will that is able so to dominate nature—finds himself helpless today to support and maintain a stable civilization?

The futility of man in the face of world-wide catastrophes is due not to the fault of his intellect, but to the fault of his emotions. Man's intellect has been steered to be a ready and efficient instrument of his will; but his emotions, far from being so obedient, have managed always to gain the ascendancy. It is they that rule man, who is himself seeking to rule the universe.

Furthermore, since no one can ever foresee how the emotions of man may flare forth and for what goals, so no one can prognosticate under the present organization of humanity what man will do with the very civilization which his intellect has built up.

It is like a child building a house of blocks. Creative power may go into the building; earnest, purposeful activity, and high intelligence. A structure

finally emerges which is very pleasing. But now another child enters upon the scene. A quarrel ensues, and in the midst of violent emotions thereby aroused the house of blocks is knocked to pieces. The child intelligence is absolutely incapable of safeguarding and maintaining its creations against the perversities of emotional and untamed violence.

Even so do man's childish emotions jeopardize everything that man's mature intellect can build. Throughout the world hatreds, jealousies, distrusts, and unreasonable prejudices endanger at every moment the stability of modern civilization.

But it is not only the violent emotions which are ruining our modern civilization. There is also the persistent, stealthy vice of greed, which, like an acid, can eat its way through all substance. Individual greed and national greed have succeeded in upsetting all the economic structure of humanity, until there is no security left even to the rich. No one sees clearly how to reconstruct the world. And no one has the power, even if the vision, to redirect the emotions and will of humanity to the extent of carrying out a sorely needed reformation which to succeed must become world-wide.

3

The future of mankind is a problem which interests not only sociologists but physical scientists. The immense age of this planet, now estimated at a billion years, is only the prelude, so astrophysicists tell

us, to at least another billion years of human life. Prognostications upon such a tremendous scale lead naturally to the question: What will be the nature of human existence throughout this vast stretch of the future? What will the world be like a billion years from now?

A thousand million years of earth-history have passed by, and mankind, the highest expression of life upon the planet, with a cultural history of only a few thousand years, has but just today reached the point of being able to accumulate, organize, and perpetuate knowledge. There does not seem to be now any limit to man's capacity to go on doing this. However, it is not with the accumulation of knowledge that we need be most concerned, but with the use to which this knowledge may be put. How adequately and how safely shall we be able to employ these great stores of information when secured?

John C. Merriam, President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, asks this question and describes serious obstacles in the way of a wise and adequate use of the power which modern knowledge gives to man. "The future of mankind, in the social sense, depends not alone upon our capacity to accumulate and to organize. Ultimately, in handling our greatest and most critical affairs we must depend upon the capacity of individuals to understand and to utilize the materials thus brought together."¹

It is not only because of their limited capacities to

¹ "The Living Past"—Charles Scribner's Sons.

operate the knowledge gained but especially because of their emotions and their innate tendency to individualism, that men find it difficult to utilize efficiently and nobly the knowledge which the scientists bring them.

"Independence," says Meriam, "is one of the most marked qualities of human beings. And this together with man's emotionality brings almost infinitely complex elements of disturbance."

There is a tremendous danger to political, industrial, and economic institutions when emotions blaze up in destructive or greedy ways, as we are now well aware.

4

The intellect can plan and create, but it is not in the vast majority of men a force capable of governing the emotions. On the contrary, the intellect with most of us serves chiefly as a tool or instrument with which to gain the things we want. Thus the intellect tends to become the servant of man's emotional nature rather than its ruler.

Those men who by the force of their intelligence can completely govern their emotional nature are so rare that they are called philosophers.

What then can govern the emotions? Only a master emotion. With some men greed plays this role of emotional domination; with others, ambition; with still others, fear. Also, all normal people experience love as a master emotion temporarily focusing and sublimating the other emotions.

But the greatest of all master emotions is religion. This is the force which normally governs and directs the emotions of human beings, harnessing them into spiritual and cultural unities.

Religion is the one power that can habitually direct man's emotions and dedicate them to noble and worthy aims such as are capable of achieving permanent structures of civilization. Religion has proved its ability to do this in the past. It will prove its ability to do this again in the future.

Religion concerns itself chiefly with the emotional nature of man. It purifies the will and bends the intellect to the service of unselfish goals. Through religion man's desires become focused; and all his dispersive forces become rounded up, tamed, and subdued to constructive and lofty purposes.

Religion, even of the most primitive kind, has always been a unifying force, establishing a code of ethics and enforcing it strictly. In this way the raw passions even of primitive men have been forced to operate within certain definite channels. Emotional expression has been regulated so as to insure stability to the group life. Free as the life of the savage is supposed to be, it is directed by ethical codes resulting from the tribal religion to an extent far surpassing any restraints in more civilized societies.

As man developed from a state of savagery and built up intricate civilizations, he has had to exercise always an ethical control motivated by religion in order to insure stability to these civilizations.

5

Today for the first time man has reached a point of consciously seeking to direct his planetary destiny; up to this time natural evolutionary currents have carried him forward. Now that he is seeking by his own purposive intellect to organize life individually and collectively into an ever progressive culture, he needs more than ever a directive force to control his emotional nature, since the greatest vision and efficacy of the human intellect becomes void of accomplishment before the disruptive forces of the human emotions.

When things have reached such a state as they are in today—decadent religious institutions proving unavailable to cope with the forces of selfishness that prevail upon the planet—what cure is available? One may easily deduce from the experiences of the past that *there is no possible cure except a spiritual renaissance.*

We face the need of a great spiritual message capable of sweeping men off their feet and carrying them on broad streams of enthusiasm to the ocean of universal love, harmony, and peace.

6

There is, it is true, a remarkable quality of idealism and fervor in the economic and social reconstruction which is at present going on in many countries; an idealism which resembles that of religion in the

prevalence of motives of service and constructive effort for the benefit of human progress as opposed to motives of profit and self-seeking.

Can the idealism of the new patriotism suffice to establish the perfect social, economic, and political organization for this country and for the world? Is there not also needed an acceptance of and adherence to these new ideals on the part of social and economic groups—powerful in intelligence, leadership, and economic resources—which must perforce sacrifice something of their position, power, and wealth if these new democratic ideals are universally to be carried out?

The pressure of necessity today, acting like the emergency pressure of war, compels a working unity and solidarity. Much can and will be accomplished by intelligent humanitarianism supported and directed by powerful leadership. But before the constructive work now going on in this country can be assured of stability and permanency, a new public conscience must become broadly operative among all classes and all economic groups. The motives of men must be changed. The situation calls not only for high intelligence and vision. It calls for sacrifice. This is a field of operation wherein religion not only is powerful, but is indispensable.

No force, no power can restore and stabilize world prosperity today but the awakening of man to the eternal realities and his obedience to the divine commands of unity, love, and unselfishness. This gospel has been preached before, but it needs to be

preached again for today. And as if Destiny knew the situation which was to arrive in this Twentieth Century, it has been preparing already the cure for the disease. There exists—at the very moment of our present social, economic, and political cataclysm—a spiritual movement so dynamic, so powerful, that it is already affecting a miraculous universal change in the motives and conduct of man both individually and collectively.

CHAPTER III

The Place of Religion in the History of Morals

IN CONSIDERING the effect of religion upon human morals and culture, it is necessary to differentiate between nature religions which have evolved through man's own naive concept concerning the cosmic forces that surround and condition him, and those religions which have been given by inspired prophets who claim to have a special revelation from the Unseen World.

Nature religions, though they enforce a primitive culture and social organization, do not lead to a very superior degree of morals. The reason is apparent. These religions are the product of man's own thoughts about life, and they rise no higher than their source. The various deities and nature spirits which nature-religionists worship express every phase of human emotion and desire. Thus there are not only gods of justice and of hospitality, but there are also gods who are patrons of thieving, of murder, of sex orgies. In such types of religion magic plays a prominent part, both as a means of bringing curses upon one's enemies and of protecting oneself from such curses and from misfortune in general.

2

The effect of revealed religions upon the lives of their adherents, as compared with effect of nature religions, is very striking. Take for instance the religion founded by Zoroaster. It inculcated honesty, kindness, industry, the development of agriculture and horticulture, the improvement of Mother Earth. All of these things were inculcated as duties owed to Ahura Mazda, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. Those who did beneficent or righteous deeds were aiding the God of Light in His struggle against the Darkness of Evil.

What was the result upon the Persians of this teaching, so much loftier than that of any surrounding peoples? It gave them an honesty, an integrity, a valor superior to that of all the peoples of Western Asia. In the midst of the sensuality and wickedness of Babylon, the Persians appeared like a flaming sword of vengeance and easily conquered all the vast territory from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean.

In spite of the natural decline of their religion in the course of time, the Zoroastrians have continued up to the present day to be superior in their morals, their character, and their business acumen to many peoples who surround them.

3

In another quarter of Western Asia appeared in the middle of the second millennium before Christ a

pastoral folk who rose to great ethical and spiritual heights through their acceptance of Divine guidance. These were the descendants of Abraham, who found in the laws of Moses a remarkably high moral code.

Obedience to these laws lifted the Hebrew people far above the moral and spiritual average of their time. As long as they followed the Mosaic Code, their civilization was just and equitable. The rights of the weak and poor were protected. Greed was minimized. Even the strangers from another race were welcomed and treated with kindness, a rare thing in the life of the ancient world.

Sensuality, the prevailing curse of the Semitic race when in a condition of urban prosperity, was banned from the life of the Hebrews by laws most severe. All forms of sex irregularities were specifically condemned by law, and these laws were enforced by severe and immediate punishment. The custom of circumcision enforced as a religious law—so much a part of their religion that it became the distinctive mark of the Hebrew—was one of the most efficacious modes of guarding against climatic sensuality that has ever been devised.

A study of the successive editions of the Mosaic Code as described in Exodus XXI-XXIII, Deuteronomy XXI-XXV, and Leviticus XVII-XXVI will reveal to what ethical heights the Hebrews were trained. There was provision, as well as pity, for the poor and needy. The laws regarding the widow, the stranger, the orphan show a deep humanitarian spirit. Charity was made a duty and a responsi-

bility. This noble consideration for the weak and defenseless rises to a remarkable height in the so-called Holiness Code of Leviticus. Herein the Hebrews were taught: "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him, but the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

No such consideration for aliens existed elsewhere in the ancient world.

Here, too, following the command to refrain from hatred and the spirit of revenge, occurs that loftiest of ethical concepts, revived by Christ and made the basis of His Law:—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"No other body of laws equals this Code in delicate thoughtfulness and beneficent humaneness," says Houghton.¹

"A peculiar piece of legislation regarding real property prevented the accumulation of land in the hands of the few and the evils of absentee landlordism. Each Sabbatical (seventh) year 'every man returned unto his possession.' Every piece of land that had been sold or transferred was restored to its original owner. This was the first bankruptcy law ever enacted. It discharged the liabilities of the debtor and enabled him to start life anew unencumbered.

"These economic principles served for centuries to keep the Hebrews a simple pastoral people, demo-

¹"Hebrew Life and Thought."

cratic, and safeguarded from the chief dangers of exploitation by fellow-citizens of cunning and greed.

"And what enforced these laws? The belief of the Hebrews that the Mosaic Code had a divine origin. All laws were issued in the name of Jehovah. In spirit there was no difference between civil, criminal and ecclesiastical law, because all had the same sanction, authority, and purpose. 'Thus saith the Lord,' was the authority not only for temporary ritualistic expedients, but for eternal principles of ethics and righteousness. The basic principle underlying the whole thought of the Mosaic is that of even-handed justice. There breathes throughout it the spirit of incorruptible justice, culminating in the magnificent injunction in Deuteronomy XVI:18-20, 'Justice, justice only, shalt thou pursue.'"²

As a result of these high ideals implanted in the Jews thousands of years ago and perennially renewed within their bosoms so long as Judaism held its force, the family and neighborly life of the Jews has been characterized by a spirit of unity and of mutual helpfulness which has been no small factor in the unique success, in whatever countries they have established themselves, of this most gifted race.

4

In another quarter of the globe Buddha, in the Sixth Century before Christ, was promulgating a

² Edward N. Calisch, "The Mosaic Code in the Light of Modern Law"—"The Torch," April, 1932.

noble doctrine of peace, of love, of self-restraint. In a world filled with hate, with rancor, with revenge, Buddha gave forth the golden maxim which is almost as much needed today as it was then: "Verily, not by hatred does hatred cease, but only by love does hatred cease."

Yet it was not enough merely to endeavor to forget hatred; one should give out love to all mankind. "As a mother at the risk of her own life guards her only child, so turn with heart of compassion toward all mankind."

In a climate tending strongly toward sensualism and sex degeneracy, Buddha taught the doctrine of self-restraint, of spotless purity. He ennobled chastity, as Christianity later was to ennoble it for the western world. "If a woman be old, regard her as your mother; if young, as your sister; if very young, as your child. The power of desire is great with men, and is to be feared withal; take then the bow of earnest perseverance, and the sharp arrow-points of wisdom. Cover your head with the helmet of right thought, and fight with fixed resolve against the five desires. Lust beclouds a man's heart, when it is confused with woman's beauty, and the mind is dazed. Better far with red-hot irons bore out both your eyes, than encourage in yourselves sensual thoughts, or look upon a woman's form with lustful desires. Better fall into the fierce tiger's mouth, or under the sharp knife of the executioner, than to excite in yourself lustful thoughts. Therefore, I say, restrain the heart, give it no unbridled license."

What was the result of Buddha's ethics? King Asoka, one of the greatest of Hindu monarchs, becoming a devotee of Buddha put an end to warfare and established peace throughout all India. In the name of Buddha he devoted himself to the welfare and prosperity of his people. He built roads, planted shade trees, inaugurated a system of irrigation. It is said that India has never been so uniformly prosperous or happy in any other period of its history. This prosperity and happiness was due to the inspiration of revealed religion acting on the heart and conscience of a great ruler.

Later Buddhism was to stimulate the ancient civilization of China and ameliorate and culturize the dawning civilization of Japan with the influence of the Lord of Mercy and Purity.

"The story of Buddhism is one of the greatest chapters in human history. It has done more to civilize mankind than any other movement except Christianity, and it numbers more adherents today than any other religion. Even in countries like China, where its followers may also be Confucianists or Taoists, its wide prevalence is clearly seen. 'Kwanyin (the Buddhist goddess of Compassion) in every household' is at once a proverb and a true statement of this deep and widespread influence. In Japan, too, its power has been persuasive and is everywhere apparent, while in the southeastern parts of Asia, where it has until lately met with no serious rivals, it has become the warp and woof of the national consciousness.

"Buddhism has been the vehicle by which the civilization of India was passed on to Ceylon in the third century B. C., to the uncivilized peoples of the Northwest frontier in this and the next century, and so on into Turkestan and the Himalayan hinterland, till by the middle of the first century A. D., during what may be called its second golden age in India, it established itself in the Chinese capital. During the following three centuries it was consolidating its power alike in China and Ceylon, and then passed on in the South to Burma and in the Far East to Korea."³

5

Into the Mediterranean world rife with cruelty, with exploitation, with cynicism, with sensuality, with magic came during the reign of Augustus Caesar a lowly carpenter with the simple message of purity, of forgiveness, of love, of devotion to God and to one's fellow men, of faith and joy. Six centuries after the mission of the Nazarene, a camel driver of Arabia arose and proclaimed a fiery oracle which purged the peoples of Western Asia of their vices of strife and sensualism, establishing a great empire founded on brotherhood under Allah.

To these two great missionary religions, active rivals still for world consideration, separate chapters will be devoted.

³ Buddhism—by Kenneth Saunders.

CHAPTER IV

Christianity Builds a Kinder World

CHRIST was born into a world filled with sin. All the evil of ancient Nineveh and Babylon had been gradually seeping through into Syria; had corrupted the Greek civilization; and was now beginning to infect the hitherto sound and sturdy culture of the Roman people. The virtues of primitive peoples—simplicity of living, loyalty, hardiness, hospitality, religious devotion and faithful performance of ethical obligations in the name of religion—had given place to a spiritual apathy, to extreme sensualism, to an attitude of cynicism concerning the claim of any duty. Greed, envy, and hatred held terrible sway upon the hearts of men. The race was to the swift and cunning. Others fell by the way and lay there, as in the story of the good Samaritan, with little chance of help.

This was the world into which Christ came, bringing a message—not new, because spiritual truth is always pristine—but vitally renewing; resurrecting in the hearts of men the ancient truths of simplicity, of faith, of charity.

2

It was not easy for Christ, with all His spiritual potency, to make saints out of His disciples. Peter,

giving way to anger and violence in the garden of Gethsemane, overcome with fear and disloyalty at the trial of Christ; John, apostle of love, urging Christ to call down from heaven fiery battalions of angels to consume their enemies,—hardly could we recognize in these disciples the glorious devotees they were later to become when the leaven planted in them by their Teacher had had time to work and bring about amazing results of character development. The episodes during the lifetime and mission of Christ form but an introduction to the colossal work of developing Christian living, of slowly forming Christian communities in the Mediterranean world.

3

It is fascinating to trace in *The Acts* and in the letters of Paul and the other apostles the work which these men did in planting, developing, and training the early Christian communities.

Paul, the flaming apostle, introduces a new psychology, a psychology as efficacious as it is true. It had been known to esoteric groups among the Greeks, followers of the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries. It had been perceived and expounded by Plato. But Paul gave to the whole world this great and pregnant truth, *that man has a dual nature.*

In one aspect man belongs to the world of the animal and tends to be bestial. On the other hand,

by reason of his spiritual heritage man tends toward the world of angelic perfection. He has that within him which enables him to be patient, to be self-restrained, to be charitable, to be self-sacrificing, to give his life in loving service to others.

These two diverse beings Paul calls the carnal and the spiritual man; and his gospel consists chiefly in the exhortation to avail oneself of the aid of the Christos for the all-important task of putting off the garment of carnality and putting on the garment of spirituality. He urges the overcoming of the flesh, with all its disintegrating impulses.

If in this doctrine there was too much of asceticism, this fault is to be laid to the personality of Paul rather than to the teaching of Christ. Yet perhaps even an excess of asceticism had its function in a world so completely given over to evil and to sensualism.

4

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot in-

inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”¹

“This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies. Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”²

Thus does Paul train his flock, directing them, exhorting them, encouraging them in ways of nobler living—always the true psychologist, man of insight into human as well as divine truths.

5

The apostle James emphasizes another aspect of spiritual living—the development of character by action rather than by ecstasy. Like his co-appellate of nineteen centuries later (William James, the psy-

¹ I Cor. 15:46-50.

² Galatians 5:16-23.

chologist) his ethical message is to transform emotion into action, aspiration into deeds of kindness. Religion is not an end in itself—only a means to illimitable degrees of character growth. What we become, not what we believe, is the justification of our faith and the salvation of our souls.

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:—For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you claims to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is in vain. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this:—to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*”³

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have re-

³ James 1:21-27.

spect to him that weareth the gay clothing and say unto him, 'Sit thou here in a good place,' and say to the poor, 'Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool':—are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If you fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' ye do well."⁴

James gives a characteristically Hebrew denunciation of the rich and powerful who exploit the poor—a vivid picture of economic evils of his day—a picture and a prophecy which might apply to the Twentieth Century:—"Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth:—and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton;

⁴ James 2:1-8.

ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”⁵

6

John's message is one of love and good will. He offers as his contribution toward nobler living an exhortation to his Christian communicants to express to their fellowmen some of that love which Christ has shown toward them.

This was to prove a very moving doctrine, one which during the next two thousand years was powerfully to stir the hearts and consciences of men. It was perhaps the keystone in the noble arch of Christian ethics through which were to march whole tribes and races of wild and semi-savage people. The figure of the Christ practicing always love and forgiveness and finally giving His life upon the cross has made a more vivid appeal to the ethical consciousness of the human race than any theological claims of religion. Many a man proud in his cruel strength was to find his character transformed into charity and gentleness as this penetrative power of the Christ-love went down the ages, melting men's hearts as the sun melts icy crags in spring.

“My little children, this write I unto you, that ye sin not. And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, ‘I know Him,’ and keepeth not His com-

⁵ James 5:1-6.

mandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you:—because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." ⁶

"And this is God's commandment: That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,

⁶ I John 2:11-17, 15-17.

and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.”⁷

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”⁸

7

All of the apostles, in striving to train these little groups of early Christians, emphasized the necessity of keeping one's self “unspotted from the world.” Particularly did they urge the importance of considering the body as the temple of the spirit, and of preserving its purity and integrity.

And what a need there was for some effective doctrine of purity! For paganism was permeated with sexual depravity similar to that traditionally associated with the cities of Gomorrah and Sodom. Sexual laxity and indulgence was eating like a cancer into the core of the vitality of the Mediterranean culture. It had ruined the Greeks and was now reaching into the very heart of the Roman world,

⁷ I John 3:23, 24.

⁸ I John 5:3, 4, 19.

vitiatng its ancient moralities and starting a current of degeneracy which Pagan moralists were unable to stem. (Is there not a similar decadence in sex-morality pervading the civilization of today?)

Now in the midst of all this evil there began to grow up little communities holding ideals dazzling in their beauty of spiritual love and chastity.

The ideals were there in shining glory. But it took several generations for even these Christian communities to manifest real purity of living. This they did achieve in time, by dint of utter segregation from the current of life of the Pagan world about them.

There was no possibility of reforming the Pagan world. Therefore the injunction of the apostles to their little flocks was to withdraw from the life of the world. The Christian communicants must begin to lead new lives wholly distinct from the Pagan life about them. They must be born not of the flesh but of the spirit. They must endeavor to live the Christ-life—relying for help, in their pilgrim's progress, upon prayer and a sense of unity with the Christos.

What a marvelous appeal the message of the Nazarene made to the innate spark of nobility in every man and woman! The poor, the down-trodden, the sensualist, the drunkard heard it and responded. Many in positions of social superiority, of wealth, of luxury, heard it and became attached.

Gradually complete little communities grew up, isolating themselves from the Pagan life about them.

Communities well-balanced; economically self-sufficing; representative of every strata of society, of various vocations, of various degrees of wealth.

Harmoniously and perfectly these early Christians learned to live together, in their common love for Christ and their earnest desire to follow in His steps.

No such vital endeavor toward character-growth is recorded in all the world's history, unless it be in similar communities of the early Buddhist church. Nobility of action became with them a habit, nobility of soul an acquirement constantly joy-giving.

8

Humanitarian institutions began to blossom out in these communities as a direct expression of the Christian doctrine of the love of God and man. The early Christians put forth every endeavor to bring it about that their communal life satisfied the ideals of service and cooperation which their souls acknowledged as divine truth.

Committees were formed for the care of the sick and needy: committees to distribute food and necessities to the poor; institutions to care for the orphans and widows.

In these Christian circles no longer did the law of the jungle hold—that the race was to the swift and that the devil could take the hindmost. Now a livelihood was assured to every communicant. No one should suffer dire want while others possessed abundance. In the name of God the Father and of

Christ the Son, all members of the living Church were knit together in a brotherhood as efficacious in practice as it was glorious in concept.

9

At first these benevolent practices of the early Christians had to be carried on in secret because of the persecutions to which Christians were liable. But as the rigor of these persecutions lessened and a general Pagan tolerance developed, we find the Christians manifesting their kind deeds in a more public way.

Soon their unique humanitarian works began to attract the attention of Roman moralists. "We must," they said, "emulate the benevolence of the Christians if we would prevent this sect from growing to the point of absorbing the whole Pagan world!"

These writers realized that the universal practice of love and service which characterized Christian communities was proving a very tempting attraction to Pagan peoples in whose midst these Christians existed; especially attractive to all who were in suffering or misfortune. These charitable practices formed one of the chief factors of the rapid spread, during the second and third centuries after Christ, of the doctrine of the Nazarene.

"Galen the Greek physician and philosopher who lived in the second century A. D. wrote a treatise upon the civilization of nations. He was not a

Christian but he has borne testimony that religious beliefs exercise an extraordinary effect upon the problems of civilization. In substance he says, 'There are certain people among us, followers of Jesus the Nazarene who was killed in Jerusalem. These people are truly imbued with moral principles which are the envy of philosophers. They believe in God and fear Him. They have hopes in His favors; therefore they shun all unworthy deeds and actions and incline to praiseworthy ethics and morals. Day and night they strive that their deeds may be commendable and that they may contribute to the welfare of humanity; therefore each one of them is virtually a philosopher, for these people have attained unto that which is the essence and purport of philosophy. These people have praiseworthy morals even though they may be illiterate.' " "

10

It was far easier for the Christians to practice moral living than for Pagans even possessing the highest ideals. For the Christians had that greatest of aids to ethical living—the motivation of religion. They believed that they possessed, each one, an immortal soul; that this soul was their real self; that the proper development of the soul was the chief aim of life upon this planet; that all their deeds here built into character which is soul-structure and would bear fruit in one way or another in the future life. This pitiful handful of years forming their

°'Abdu'l-Bahá in "Promulgation of Universal Peace," page 82.

destiny upon this planet was of infinitesimal value, they thought, compared to the great stretch of eternity which lay before them. How childish, how foolish, how even tragic, therefore, to waste the rich spiritual opportunities of this life in riotous or selfish living and thus incur immense liabilities toward the future existence!

Therefore the Christians, prompted by the most efficacious moral motives which anyone can have—the love of God and the desire to grow more perfect—endeavored to express righteousness in all their thoughts and deeds. They knew that the greatest reward for doing right is to grow more noble and more near to God; and that the greatest punishment for doing evil is to grow more evil and more densely veiled from that Truth which the Initiated know as Love.

11

Compare this noble path of progress onward and upward forever with the doctrine which held the lives of the contemporaneous Pagans. "*Carpe diem!*" sang Horace. "Let us seize the day, spend it in profligacy, enjoy ourselves, make merry, for we know not what the morrow will bring!" So the pagan world of today in our great cities (replicas of the ancient Babylon) have as their motto: "We are a long time dead! Let's live while we live!" Such tends to become the guiding motive in the lives of those who have no belief in future existence. *Rewards and punishments are not clearly seen to follow*

in kind, in this brief existence here. Although a few of the dishonest become detected and punished, others flourish like the green bay tree; have beautiful homes in city and country; travel widely and mingle with the leading people of the world; in fact, possess all that the heart of man longs for as regards material things. On the other hand, men of principle who stand for truth regardless of what sacrifice it may cost are often seen to lead lives extremely limited and impoverished as regards external circumstances.

Thus to the crass materialist the moral of it all is to seize the most one can of the life about one today. Be a "good fellow"; be loyal to your friends and ruthless to your enemies; capture all you can of this world's goods and let the morrow take care of itself—this is the creed of the soulless. The greatest moralist in the world would pour out his words in utter futility upon the hearts and consciences of such as these.

What is to save this paganistic world of today? A world without faith, without guidance, without moral standards! A despairing world seeking in pleasures of the senses an anodyne to doubt!

12

Into the sensualistic materialism of the pagan Roman world the vivid faith of the early Christians irrupted like a volcanic stream burning its way and purging the countryside of evil. Finally this stream of Living Force overpowered the great Roman Em-

pire until we find the whole Mediterranean world flooded and dominated by it.

In 325 A. D. Christianity became the state religion of Rome. For the next few centuries its work is not mainly that of proselyting, but that of trying to salvage the broken forces of what had once been so powerful an Empire. Totally lacking in unity and coherence because of the terrible exploitation, greed, and cruelty which was practiced on every hand, the Roman Empire fell in 410 A. D. before the onslaught of a fresh, a vigorous, and a morally wholesome race—the Teutons.

And now Christianity is able not only to bind up the wounds of the fallen, but also to *conquer the conquerers*. Its doctrine of the gentle Saviour, the good Shepherd, the glorious Messiah giving His life upon the cross—this sacrificial doctrine produced a miraculous effect upon these vigorous Teutons who had known only aggression and force in their lives. Miraculously that tremendous tide of violence which secular Rome could not stem spiritual Rome was able to capture and to guide. Out from Rome then went missionaries to all quarters of Europe, permeating the very heart of the Teutonic world, putting an end to cruel Druid rites, softening savage hearts and winning whole tribes to Christ.

Meanwhile education and culture, which had fallen into decay, were resurrected in the monasteries and clerical communities. It was the Church which kept alive learning during those Dark Ages. It was the Church which held before the people ideals of kindness, of tenderness to the suffering, of chastity, of service.

But now a strange thing happens. Christianity in conquering the world was spending and losing much of its vital force. The farther it spread out the more attenuated became its vitality as regards its power to change morals and to sanctify human emotions. Saintly lives become the exception rather than the rule.

As centuries slip by, the vitality of this great faith seems to be growing feebler and feebler. Religion, which had been the chief unifying force of Europe, becomes weak in its hold; while politics and commerce more and more absorb man's attention and will-power.

The farther we get away from the century of its origin, the more lifeless do we find Christianity becoming. Its doctrines are not now the guiding force among masses of people. Nationalism, the new religion, has taken its place. We find the church divided, broken up, expressing too much the thought of the world and too little the thought of Christ. Whatever country breaks forth into war, we find the Church in that country lending itself to such aggression. We find the individual church hesitant, almost utterly negligent, in the face of grave social and economic ills in its midst. True, the church still attempts to ameliorate the lives of the poor, but it makes no attempt to prevent their exploitation by the powerful. The Church has become an appendage of Caesar, rather than an appendage of Christ.

Interrupting this general decadent trend of the Christian faith, there appear from time to time vivid eruptions of a volcanic force similar to that which prevailed universally in the early days of Christianity. Thus we behold a succession of great spiritual reformers, who by charging their own lives from the cosmic battery of Christ's spirit are able to charge the lives of many thousands and millions of followers, not only contemporaneous but for many decades or even centuries.

We see St. Francis of Assisi rise from his dead dissolute self to a life of extreme saintliness, founding the Order of the Franciscans which became the chief expression for centuries of that charity and service which so strongly characterized early Christianity.

We see Ignatius Loyola—a nobleman turned saint and consecrating his life to the service of the Church and of humanity—lay the foundations of the most powerful religious order known to Christendom, the Jesuits, who were to achieve work of enormous scope in the field of world-wide proselyting and education.

We see Martin Luther and John Calvin shake all Europe with the force of a religious zeal that feeds direct upon the Gospels, reverting from a corrupt ecclesiasticism to the original teachings of the Christ. We see their inspired religious thinking lead to the overturning of thrones, to the establishment of the idea of social and political democracy, and finally

to the founding of a great nation dedicated at its inception to righteousness and to God.

We see John Fox—a common man whose life expresses the miraculous, the saintly, the apostolic—following his Inner Light and founding the sect of Quakers who were to display a conscience and a heart superior for decades, nay, for centuries, to those of any other sect of Christendom. (There was scarcely a French traveler to England during the eighteenth century who did not report that the Quakers were the most interesting group of people to be seen there.) We see Quakers instituting vast humanitarian reforms; putting an end to the world's slave trade and then abolishing slavery; bringing about prison reform in England; compelling a more decent treatment of the insane; establishing the doctrine and practice of universal free public education.¹⁰

It is worthy of note that the important reform movements of the Nineteenth Century were not so much the result of a general moral evolution as they

¹⁰ Joseph Lancaster, an earnest Quaker, in 1799 succeeded in interesting wealthy Quakers of the nobility in a feasible plan for education of the masses so that the poor as well as the well-to-do could read the Holy Scriptures and have that spiritual guidance which to the Quaker seemed so essential to right living. By his new monitorial system a thousand children could be taught to read, write and cipher by one teacher at a cost of only a shilling a head per year. The Royal Lancastrian Society was formed to spread the blessings of literacy among the poor. Joseph Lancaster was later invited to this country to give an exhibition of his system in New York, Baltimore, and other places; and this was the beginning of the free public education movement in this country.

were the expression of a particular spiritual enlightenment and zeal. It took a great deal of effort, of sacrifice, of ridicule, and even of persecution to effect these reforms. Only a religious fervor such as animated the Quakers was able to create a force sufficient to fight against the current evils of the epoch, before which communicants of other churches stood neutral or resistless.

15

Many other vital reform movements have arisen within the Christian Church. Many noble qualities enter into our daily lives today as the result of two thousand years of Christian indoctrination. Earnest missionary zeal gives evidence of a great deal of religious vitality still left in Christendom.

But has the institution founded upon the message of Christ—the present Christian Church—sufficient spiritual power to eliminate the organic evils of the world? To ban war, to suppress economic exploitation, and to establish universal peace and brotherhood? Has it the capacity and vitality to inaugurate a world-wide ideal civilization?

Or must we await a new spiritual dynamic—more potent, more universal, more capable of winning the allegiance of all races, creeds, and nations?

CHAPTER V

Islam Transmits the Classic Culture

THE history of Islam uniquely demonstrates how revealed religion can swiftly change the morals, character, and culture of a people. True, Islam has not yet raised its adherents to that quality of gentle living, refinement, and humanitarianism which characterize the best fruits of Christianity; but considering the length of time that it has been active and the low state of morals of those peoples under whom it arose, one must acknowledge that the moral effect of Islam has been stupendous.

The Arabs, until the advent of Muhammad, were a patriarchal race living in semi-barbarism; illiterate, primitive in their religion which was an idolatrous form of nature worship, and sensual and unorganized in their sex life. It was a race which buried superfluous daughters in the sand and divided wives by lot among the sons at the death of a father. It was a race torn by eternal death-dealing feuds between families, clans, and tribes; and living as much on pillage and robbery as on honest toil.

A famous modern descendant of the race, describing it as of this pre-Islamic period says, "These Arab tribes were in the lowest depths of savagery and barbarism. In comparison with them the wild Indians of America were as advanced as Plato."

It was to such a race that Muhammad came. Beginning his mission of Prophethood in 607 A. D., he rebuked their idolatry, destroyed their idols, urged them to abandon the practice of child murder, limited them to four wives, and pointed them the way to unity, brotherhood, and peace under the protection and favor of Allah, the One God.

The doctrines of Muhammad spread with amazing rapidity. Before he died (632 A. D.) the whole of Arabia had embraced Islam and had been brought into a strongly cohesive spiritual and cultural unity. Before the end of the century the peoples of western Asia and northern Africa fell one by one into the conquering embrace of Islam—Syria, Irak, Persia, Egypt, and the whole southern littoral of the Mediterranean.

2

The history of Islam is in truth the fascinating story of one of the most powerful and rapidly accelerated expressions of racial and cultural energy that have been recorded on this planet. We see the extraordinary spectacle of a somewhat primitive race—suddenly spiritually awakened by Muhammad and increasingly stimulated intellectually by contact with the aesthetic and scientific marvels of Greek classicism—become the organizer of scientific culture for the whole region of western Asia inhabited by many races of ancient but stagnant culture.

It is an overwhelming surprise to most of us to

learn that for the greater part of three centuries Islam was the torch-bearer for the world as regards civilization; that she was the leader in science, in discovery, in the cult of beauty, and in the application of intelligence and initiative to perfecting the arts of life; that her government was on the whole just and beneficent and tolerant of other religions; and that during this period order and peace were established in western Asia and northern Africa, from India to Spain, such as had not been since the Pax Romana. All this was accomplished at a time when Europe was slowly emerging from a semi-barbarism in comparison with which the contemporaneous Muslims seem a people of enlightenment, of education, of wisdom and high culture.

3

"The democratic teachings of the Prophet everywhere prevented the acquisition of large estates by private owners and promoted the development of a prosperous class of small farmers.

"The ancient canals for irrigation were repaired and restored to use. Many a tract of fertile ground that had been allowed to run to waste was again brought under cultivation, and a method of intensive agriculture was for the first time introduced by the Arabs."¹

Immense wealth and prosperity—resulting from conquest, agriculture, and trade—began to express

¹ Dr. Heinrich Schurtz: "Mohammadan Western Asia."

itself in elegance of living; in beautiful architecture and gardens; and in patronage of the arts and of learning. One Grand Vizier founded at Baghdad a college which he endowed with an amount equivalent to three and a half million dollars. This college was attended by six thousand students from every class of life, from noble to mechanic. Other schools and colleges as well as free public libraries were founded. The sciences flourished. Astronomy and mathematics reached such a height that in the plains of Sinaar and again in those of Kufa the Khalif Al Mamoun's mathematicians correctly measured a degree of the great circle of the earth, and reckoned the entire circumference of the globe to be twenty-four thousand miles. Yet six hundred years later Europe was to deride Columbus for his belief that the earth was round!

4

Adherents of Islam, the Moors, also created in Spain a remarkable civilization. They not only restored the Roman culture of Spain but they also brought an infusion of new and invigorating blood, a capacity for progress, and a few specific arts of civilization which immensely increased the prosperity of Andalusia. Most important of these was the art of irrigation, practiced from the earliest times in Mesopotamia but hitherto unknown to the dry and unproductive plains of Spain. Under the application of the agricultural science of the Arabs,

the deserts of Andalusia now began to blossom as the rose. Many new and useful plants were introduced by the Moors and agriculture thrived as never before.

Moorish Spain, having now become a part of the great Islamic Empire, developed an extensive and profitable commerce. In the towns a flourishing trade was rapidly built up on the remains of the Roman civilization. The products of Andalusia not only sold in Spain, but also were exported to the markets of Africa, Irak, and Persia. Spain found itself revived and invigorated by the mighty pulse of the great Organism of Islam which was driving fresh blood through the choked-up arteries of so many ancient civilizations.

The arts and sciences also profited by this interflow of cultural life. The remotest districts of Islam were now united by a common faith and a common language. Scholars, poets, architects—all traveled freely about this cosmopolitan Islamic area, seeking their fortune or further learning in the various rich and luxuriant centers of the new Arab civilization. Thus from lands so far distant as Turkestan, Persia, Arabia, men of genius gravitated to Cordova; and from Cordova occasionally the Spanish philosophers or theologians would visit the Near East to continue their studies at the Universities of Cairo, Baghdad, Samarcand, and Bokhara.

Thus, prospering through basic and efficient application of the arts of living to their environment, the rulers and leaders of Cordova rapidly built up their city till it became a dazzling center of Muslim

culture, second only to Baghdad in wealth and power, in advancement of learning and in architectural beauty.

5

The University of Cordova, the first university to be established in Europe, drew its audiences from among the graduates of numerous public schools, and attracted numbers of eager students from Asia and Africa, and even Christians from all nations of Europe. Mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and medicine were taught, as well as Muslem theology and jurisprudence. The quality and extent of scholarship here were far superior to any existing elsewhere in Europe. Thousands of pupils filled the halls of the mosques in which the favorite professors lectured. Learning and the sciences flourished, and the art of medicine became so perfected that princes from European kingdoms came to Cordova for treatment.

The rulers, both khalif and nobles, fostered and promoted the cause of learning. Reading and writing were universal accomplishments among the common people. The Khalif Chakam especially made himself patron of learning and of science, aiming to make Cordova the most brilliant center of the intellectual life of Islam. He had an intense fondness for literature, and he employed agents throughout the East to purchase scarce and curious books. He himself wrote to every distinguished author for a copy of his work, for which he paid handsomely.

And whenever he was unable to purchase a book he had it copied. His library ultimately contained four hundred thousand volumes, an enormous number for a collection consisting of manuscripts only.

6

Not only did agriculture—with the Moorish introduction of sugar, rice, cotton, in addition to indigenous products—flourish now as never before or since in Spain, but manufacturing was undertaken on a large scale for that epoch. Factories for the weaving of silk, cotton, woolen, and linen employed tens of thousands of the people. Moorish plate and jewelry, steel and leather goods, and the famous process of damascening gold on silver, sold all over the then known world. Their carpets and silks, their gold and silver embroidery, were long unrivalled.

The Moors proved themselves enlightened and efficient appliers of science to the arts of life. They were also industrious. Under their rule Spain enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity and a higher civilization than at any previous period.

The broad religious spirit of the Moors was shown not only by their tolerance and generous treatment toward their Christian subjects but also in their attitude toward the Jews. Under the Muhammadan dominion the Jews in Spain passed their happiest period in Europe and the Jewish medieval literature there attained its highest development.

“In truth, the northern inhabitants of Europe, liv-

ing as they did in gloomy city alleys or miserable village hovels clustered around the castles of rude, uncultured nobility, would have thought themselves in fairyland could they have been transported to this joyous, brilliant world. But that which would have especially surprised them, which would have brought a flush of shame to the cheeks of any one with a spark of Christian feeling in his heart, was the noble spirit of toleration and of intellectual freedom which breathed over the happy plains of Andalusia. They would have been forced to admit that the religion of love might receive from the followers of the hated Muhammad instruction in that generous toleration of creeds with which the Founder of their faith had sought to inspire them by word and example. Herein lies the fascination which today impels us to look back with yearning and regret upon the too rapid flight of that happy period when Cordova and Toledo guarded the sacred fire of civilization upon European ground, a fascination which still throws its glamour around the halls of the Alcazar of Seville or the pinnacles of the Alhambra.”²

7

During the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries the civilization of Europe compared very poorly with that of the Muslem world.

A large number of the scholars and writers of the

² Dr. Henry Schurtz: “The Pyrnaean Peninsula” in “The World’s History.” London, William Heineman.

Saracenic civilization were in the habit of wandering from city to city, from court to court. The whole Muslem world was open to them, regardless of their race or religion, and if they had something worth while to give, they were always certain to be received everywhere with enthusiasm. Not until the present century has the Occident become such a cultural and commercial unity as was the Islamic Empire under the Abbassides. And in certain respects—as in the use of Arabic as the universal language of culture, science, and commerce—the Abbasside State was in many ways more unified than is modern Europe.

The Arabs have the distinguished honor of having created the university out of schools dependent upon the mosques. Their universities became great centers of learning, attracting scholars from every quarter of the globe, powerfully advancing the progress of science and learning, and serving as inspiration and models for the subsequent universities of Europe.

The early Muslems everywhere were remarkably tolerant of other religions. Christians and Jews flourished side by side with the Muslem populations, and individuals of these religions had free opportunity for advancement in the world of scholarship or in the bureaucracies.

8

“Let us compare the two civilizations,” says Seignobos in his *Histoire de la Civilization au Moyen*

Age, "which in the eleventh century divided the Ancient World. In the West—miserable little cities, peasant's huts and great fortresses—a country always troubled by war, where one could not travel ten leagues without running the risk of being robbed. And in the Orient—Constantinople, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad—all the cities of the 'Arabian Nights,' with their marble palaces, their workshops, their schools, their bazaars, their villages and with the incessant movement of merchants who traveled in peace from Spain to Persia.

"There is no doubt that the Mussulman and Byzantine worlds were richer, better policed, better lighted than the Western world.

"In the eleventh century these two worlds began to become acquainted; the barbarous Christians came into contact with the civilized Mussulmans in two ways—by war and by commerce. *And by contact with the Orientals the Occidentals became civilized.*"

9

The remarkable civilization which resulted from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad has been described here somewhat at length because it furnishes a very striking example of the way in which religion lays the foundation for civilization.

What was it that made possible that extraordinary blazing forth of learning, science, and culture throughout the Islamic world? This remarkable progress was plainly due to a new security which had

entered into human living, from the banks of the Ganges in India to the banks of the Guadalquivir in Spain.

Scattered throughout this vast region were the slumbering ashes and sparks of ancient civilizations. But these ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean and of western Asia had lost order and stability. Nation was set against nation; people against people; creed against creed. Races had become corrupt and degenerate. Sensualism, greed, brigandry, war destroyed all security of living. Populations were harassed. No general prosperity could exist in such a chaotic situation. Sciences could not flourish; the arts of living could not prosper; progress was impossible in a world of such disunity, disruption, and disintegration.

10

Into this miasma of moral infection and decay blew the clean fresh wind of Islam, sweeping away with some of the violence of a cyclonic blast the old debris of mutual distrust, hatred, chronic violence, and degenerate morals.

The precepts of Muhammad brought about simple living even on the part of rulers. They brought about honesty, fraternity, and a powerful cohering unity in the name of Allah. All who accepted the simple Muslem creed—"There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Prophet"—became enrolled into the brotherhood of Islam regardless of race, color or previous creed.

Order was thoroughly established and robbery suppressed, so that it became possible for caravans to travel from India to Spain by way of Northern Africa in perfect safety—a thing which had never been possible before in the history of the world.

11

As long as the teachings of Muhammad continued to powerfully motivate the common people and their leaders, this remarkable culture of Islam continued to prevail.

In the course of time, however, prosperity bred pride, greed and sensualism. Too much luxury weakened and made effeminate both rulers and people; the low and humid climate of Mesopotamia had its debilitating effect; and luxuriant city-dwelling (always disastrous to the finer qualities of Semitic races) gradually weakened the moral fibre.

The decline of Islamic culture after the eleventh century cannot be ascribed to any flaw in the religion itself as revealed by Muhammad, but rather to the well-known tendency of human nature to sag and decline from heights to which it has been lifted by a great inspiration.

Mankind simply cannot hold itself up continuously on lofty heights of living. The stimulation, the inspiration for moral and spiritual living has to be periodically renewed.

But in spite of the decline of Islam—its fast-growing obscurantism, scholasticism, and bigotry—we see even today certain great moral traits directly the result of this religion.

Honesty is a leading characteristic of all the Muhammadan peoples. The severe punishments prescribed by Islam and the general conscience as regards stealing have kept the Muslem people very free from petty thieving. One can see in towns the population of which are completely Muhammadan the remarkable sight of shops left entirely open and unprotected during the noon hour of prayer on Fridays, while the owners and clerks are attending the Mosque services. It has been a common saying among missionaries in Asia Minor that if an object is lost while passing through a Christian village nine times out of ten it will never be returned; whereas on the contrary an article lost in a Turkish village will nine cases out of ten be honestly returned to the owner.

Islam, in spite of prejudicial ideas of Americans regarding the evils of polygamy, has had a remarkably purifying effect upon the sex life of its adherents. When one recalls that the Muhammadan peoples live, for the most part, in climates tending strongly to stimulate the passions and sensual qualities of human nature, one can appreciate the powerful effect of the Muhammadan code in preserving its men and women from sexual laxity. Prostitution as

an institution is unknown in purely Muhammadan districts. It exists only on the fringes through contact with European culture. Any form of sexual laxity is very rare throughout the Muhammadan civilization, except in latitudinarian Persia.

As regards abstention from alcohol Muhammad abolished with one stroke of the pen, so to speak, a social evil which the rest of the world has been combating for millenniums and still are in a mess about. Alcohol was prohibited by the Qur'an and until very recent years that prohibition has been absolutely effective in Muhammadan countries, except in certain groups of intelligentsia who expressed latitudinarianism in every attitude toward their religion, and in certain rare sects which interpreted away this injunction. But for the most part prohibition is absolutely enforced among the adherents of Islam today. Thus alcohol, with all its train of open and hidden vices and disasters, has been for thirteen centuries eliminated from the Islamic world.

How can one measure the beneficial results upon the health and vigor of the race, of so many centuries of freedom from the taints of sexual diseases and of alcoholism?

13

Thus we see in the history of Islam much the same cycle which Christianity, Buddhism, in fact all the great religions, have passed through. Christianity, for instance, served to spread the civilization

of the Mediterranean world through the barbarous tribes of northern and eastern Europe. Then it passed, during the Middle Ages, into a stage of scholasticism and obscurantism such as Islam has been in for the last few centuries. The effect of scientific discovery, and of the enlightenment and prosperity which have followed in its train has been destructive both to the obscurantism and to the fervent faith which characterized Medievalism. Islam is now passing through this same stage of intellectual advancement, with commensurate spiritual decline.

CHAPTER VI

The Rise and Decline of Religions

EVERYTHING in the world is subject to change," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "But this transmutation and change are requirements of life. See, for instance, these flowers before us. They come forth from a seed. They grow to perfection, but when they have reached the state of perfection they go back again. This is the invariable law of creation. Likewise man develops until he has grown to maturity. When he reaches beyond the state of maturity, he begins to decline. All religions of God are subject to this same law. They are founded in order to blossom out and develop and fulfil their mission. They reach their zenith and then decline and come to an end."

It is easier to perceive the decline in other religions than to become aware that the period of decline has been reached in one's own religion. Whether we like to acknowledge it or not, the fact is that Christianity, compared with its dynamic power in past centuries, manifests an evident decline of spiritual force. In the Western world science has ousted religion as the directive force of society, and religious skepticism has grown with great rapidity in exact proportion to the advance of scientific knowledge.

The age-long belief and faith in God—that an-

cient characteristic known as piety—has almost entirely disappeared from the life of men in public affairs. A century ago in this country God was publicly recognized as the guiding power in all human affairs. Our coins bore the pious motto, "In God we trust." All public announcements were qualified by the initials, "D. V."—*Deo volente* (God willing). People in need asked charity "in the name of Christ." The conviction that one's actions here carried over into the life beyond was a strong motive in the ethical life of Christendom.

But now all these beliefs and practices have vanished from the life of the typically educated classes. People still recognize that the qualities enjoined upon Christians, as set forth in the New Testament, are admirable and worthy of cultivation. But that mystic power which enabled the early Christians to so remarkably express these spiritual qualities has almost entirely vanished from the life of Christendom.

We moderns are very conscious of the comforts and pleasures which science has brought us, but we are too little conscious of God as the one power which animates and dominates all things. We have strong aspirations for material progress, but too little aspiration for spiritual progress.

2

Spiritual decline is not, however, unique to Christianity. It characterizes all the other existing world religions.

Buddhism, except for a few active sects, has for many centuries shown decrepitude and exhaustion. Today it exerts little influence as a factor in human culture and progress.

Confucianism has fallen before the onslaughts of science and modernism. The intellectual Chinese, while holding still to the symbolism of their Master, are entirely eclectic in their religious attitude. In 1903 the last class to receive the Confucian education was graduated from the Imperial University of Peking. Now the curriculum of Chinese education is secular and modernistic. Whatever there is left of ancient loyalties is being transferred to modern heroes such as Sun Yat Sen.

Muhammadanism, born later than any of these religions, has maintained its youth and vigor beyond any of them, as might be expected. It has been, and still is, the religion the most uniformly potent in the lives of its communicants, the most zealous, the most effectively propagandic. During the last hundred years Islam has won almost all Africa to its fold. But Islam, which up to the present moment has carried itself so proudly and vigorously, is now meeting with disaster under the blows of that same modern scientific knowledge which is tolling the death knell to the theological systems of all the other great world religions. Educated and intelligent Muslims are rapidly falling away from the Faith. They no longer hold themselves to the obligatory forms of their religion. A majority of them have become free thinkers. Those who retain any loyalty to their

religion are seeking to bring about reforms such as will harmonize Islam with the claims of modern science.

3

What does all this mean? Does it mean that religion itself is dying out from the world, and that science will take its place? Twenty years ago it might have seemed that science could manage the world and guide it into permanent prosperity and happiness. But such does not now seem the case. Science has proved a marvelous instrument for material progress; but it is certain that no ideal civilization based upon justice and mutuality can be established by means of science alone. "Science is one of the wings with which humanity must fly; but religion is the other," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

If religion, however, is such a necessary force, why is it that the religions of the world today are suffering such a decline? Do not religions teach immortal Truth? Why, then, should they pass through these phases of decline and death?

4

In order to understand what is happening to the spiritual life of humanity, we first must realize that *religion in its essence* is quite a different thing from *religious institutionalism*. Religion is pure Truth, or as much of pure Truth as humanity can receive. But the religious institutions founded upon this

Truth are the work of man. Gradually, through the accretions of centuries, there grows up a body of dogma and theology which has nothing to do with the pure spiritual teachings of the Founders. These accretions, like the lime that gathers in the arteries of the aged, prevent circulation. As the life force diminishes, senescence sets in.

One of the fundamental laws of the universe is that everything that is born must die. *Everything that comes together by combination and accretion must suffer the final event of decomposition.* Nothing in the phenomenal world is immortal, except life itself. Every form changes, yielding place to new and other forms.

Institutions, being man-made and partaking of the phenomenal rather than of the Real, pass through phases of birth, maturity, old age, and death as everything else in the phenomenal world must do. *No institution upon this planet has yet proved permanent.* It is safe to say that no institution ever will prove so. But just as the life force which underlies all the manifestations of nature is eternal, so the Truth and spiritual Force which underlie all the manifestations of religion are eternal. *This Spiritual Force, just as the life force of nature, tends always to express itself in new forms progressively adapted to the needs of the times.*

5

It was Professor George Foote Moore, one of the greatest authorities on comparative religion, who

first made apparent to me this phenomenon of the evolution of religious institutionalism. All religions, he demonstrated in his course in comparative religion, pass through three stages. In the first and earliest stage, they strongly support ethics; in fact ethical and religious laws are one. In the second or intermediate stage, religious practices and ethical practices become neutral one to another; for the religious practices have taken on a form of ritualism which tends to flow along separately from the ethical life of the community.

In its third and last stage, *religion becomes antagonistic to ethics*. This strange event comes about in the following way: religious expression, now almost wholly ritualistic, lends itself to the uses of men who are powerfully exploiting their fellow beings and who want that communal dignity and respect which formal religious practice bestows. The church is not to blame if these respectability-seeking exploiters wish to avail themselves of its mantle; the church is mightily to blame, however, in allowing itself to lend dignity and respect to these exploiters.

Thus it has come about in the history of every religion that whereas in its early stages it powerfully directs the ethical life of its communicants—teaching justice, kindness, service, and self-sacrifice—in its old age it not only tolerates, but allows itself to be put in a position of defending, unethical practices.

The history of Judaism vividly illustrates this truth. We find in the books of the prophets and in the words of Christ ample material evidencing

a periodic and general decline from the early simplicity and high ethical level of the patriarchal days. A very important part of the teaching of Jesus was His denunciation of this acquired unethical quality of Judaism. The Christ message can be seen as a new and powerful spiritual force opposing itself to the prevailing evils of greed and commercialism. In fact, it was this denunciation of the leaders of Judaism which brought about Christ's crucifixion. He might have gone on preaching as long as He wanted His doctrine of love, of simplicity, of trust in God—and His career would not have been disturbed. But not content with this He directly attacked the worldliness, the insincerity, the cynicism of the Church; and this is what brought about His martyrdom.

6

The history of every great world religion, carefully studied, will reveal this same fundamental law: namely, that religion, as it tends to crystallize into form and ritual, correspondingly declines in spiritual power and in ethical effectiveness.

From the rational point of view, it is not surprising that religions, as institutions, should gradually mature, grow old, and lose their vitality. True, this pregnant fact has not been realized in the past by zealous adherents of the various religions. In fact, it is hard for adherents of any great institution to realize that this human organization to which they give their loyalty, which holds at the moment so much of power and vitality, is sure to decline and to be followed by other and newer institutions, just as

the spring of one year must decline and give place to the spring of another year.

Only until recently have humans been capable of viewing their evolution scientifically, objectively, and impersonally; of getting outside of themselves—so to speak—and studying the processes by which humanity unfolds its powers and gradually advances. By the aid of modern scientific research religious institutions can be studied in their origin, their development, and their decline—just as can other human institutions social, political, or economic. For the first time in history the comparative study of religions has become possible, and intelligent people can trace the law of evolution and progress working here as elsewhere.

7

The various stages in the evolution of religions do not mean, however, that the Truth which is the basis and the foundation of the Church suffers any diminution in its Reality. Truth is always Truth. It may suffer eclipse but it never dies. From the pristine words and deeds of the Founder of a religion there emanates a dynamic power enabling communicants to live spiritual lives. This power, however, becomes lessened by the process of time. *Humanity, like a battery which has to be recharged, is under the necessity of fresh spiritual impulse at stated intervals.*

Fortunately for the spiritual evolution of humanity, at every epoch when one religion has been

outgrown a new religion has magically arisen—a religion full of vital hope and promise and charged with the power to remold and to remake the lives of its communicants.

Such religions do not spring up by chance. They come as a special communication and dispensation of that great Creative and Guiding Force of the universe which we call God; and they are revealed through spiritualized beings who are special channels for the flow of this Creative Force.

These Founders of religions not only proclaim anew the everlasting truths and universal moral laws which must guide humanity, but they bring a subtle and tremendous force to bear upon the life of humanity. They are human dynamos generating from the World of the Unseen an electric spiritual force which they communicate to their disciples. The disciples, charged with this force, are able in turn to communicate it to others.

The Great Teachers of humanity are perfect mirrors of the Divine. They manifest the power and attributes of the Infinite, which in its Essence is unknowable to man but which in its effect can be perceived and realized. Focusing the rays of the Holy Spirit, they act as channels through which a Cosmic force is spread over the whole world, changing human lives and regenerating the souls of men. "They are the great ambassadors of God," says the English mystic Geoffrey Hodson, describing the world Saviours. "They live on earth to form an embassy through which They may represent the glory, the splendor, the bliss of the Land in which

They dwell. The embodiments of unity; masters of life, conquerors of form; illumined by the vision of the highest; they keep alive the flame of idealism in the souls of men, lest it should die out, and dying, leave mankind without a light to guide him on his long journey through the dark night of time and space. They live but to show to men the way from the darkness to the light."

8

In the fresh new periods of religions we see all the glory and the vigor of youth. A religion flourishes, grows, expands, as does nature in her spring; next, it reaches a maturity which is expressed more in tranquillity than in expansive force; afterwards comes the autumn of religion with its rich fruit of noble and humanitarian institutions; finally comes the winter of religion when the vital forces withdraw and all the institutions and outer forms lose their vitality and *élan*. Then it is that a new dispensation is needed. And when needed, it never fails to come.

"Every spring has an autumn and every autumn has its spring. For instance, the appearance of His Holiness Christ was a divine springtime. . . . The Sun of Reality dawned, the cloud of mercy poured down its rain, the breezes of Providence moved, the world became a new world, mankind reflected an extraordinary radiance, souls were educated, minds were developed, intelligences became acute and the human world attained a new freshness of life like unto the advent of spring. Then gradually that

spring was followed by the autumn of death and decay. . . . The people became negligent and oblivious. Minds weakened until conditions reached such a crisis that material science rose in the ascendant. . . . The nations were enmeshed in superstition and blind imitation. Discord and disagreement arose, culminating in strife, war, and bloodshed. Hearts were torn asunder in violence. Various denominations appeared, diverse sects and creeds arose, and the whole world was plunged into darkness.”¹

“The divine religions are like the progression of the seasons of the year. When the earth becomes dead and desolate and because of frost and cold no trace of vanished spring remains, the springtime dawns again and clothes everything with a garment of life. . . . The Divine Prophets are as the coming of spring, each renewing and quickening the teachings of the Prophet who came before Him.”²

9

Such has been the history of religions upon this planet, and we may well reason that such will always be the case. *There never will be, never can be, a religious institution endowed with immortality.* Religions will continue to rise and fall as they have done in the past. But the Truth which is back of these religions remains ever fresh, ever creative, ever living.

¹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in “Promulgation of Universal Peace,” page 52

² ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in “Promulgation of Universal Peace,” page 122

CHAPTER VII

The Need of a Spiritual Renaissance

“**T**HEREFORE a power is needed to carry out and execute what is known and admitted to be the remedy for human conditions; namely, the unification of mankind. Furthermore, it is evident that this cannot be realized through material process and means. The accomplishment of this unification cannot be through racial power, for races are different and diverse in tendencies. It cannot be through patriotic power, for nationalities are unlike. Nor can it be effected through political power, since the policies of governments and nations are various. That is to say, any effort toward unification through these material means would benefit one and injure another because of unequal and individual interests. Some may believe this great remedy can be found in dogmatic insistence upon imitations and interpretations. This would likewise be without foundation and result. Therefore it is evident that no means but an ideal means, a spiritual power, divine bestowals and the breaths of the Holy Spirit will heal this world sickness of war, dissension and discord. Nothing else is possible; nothing can be conceived of. But through spiritual means and the divine power it is possible and practicable.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Whatever be the causes of the present chaos into which the world has fallen, many are agreed that a spiritual rejuvenation of humanity is the first requisite for reformation and stabilization. There must come to humanity a deeper sense of brotherhood—individual, national and racial. Man must realize emotionally, as he already does intellectually, the actual interdependence of all people. No individual, no class, no community today can live unto itself. We are bound together by indissoluble ties.

This planet, sociologically and economically speaking, is plainly an organic unity. The prosperity of all depends upon the prosperity of one, just as the prosperity of one depends upon the prosperity of all. One nation cannot thrive while all the rest are plunged in economic disaster. Our modern industrial and technical civilization requires free and universal interchange of raw materials and commodities. The whole world as well as any part of it depends for its prosperity not only upon its ability to produce goods but also upon its ability to sell goods. When any great nation is destroyed as a consumer of world goods, the whole world suffers as well as that nation.

So it is within each country. The prosperity of the whole depends upon the prosperity of every part. Selfishness, aggressiveness, and exploitation on the part of one group not only does harm to other groups, but eventually returns like a boomerang to injure the offending group. The capitalist, taking

more than his share of the profits of industry, finally harms himself by lessening the consuming power of the masses; and the masses, when usurping all power, deprive themselves of the leadership necessary for industrial organization and efficiency.

3

Intellectually we realize these truths. But how ineffectual is that realization in the way of actually causing a change to occur in our economic and political institutions! These new ideals have not yet penetrated the emotional life of humanity deeply enough to motivate action. Self-seeking greed is still the strongest motive of conduct. And greed is ever shortsighted. A dollar held before the eye can shut out the whole world.

When we realize how deep-seated and primitive is the acquisitive instinct in man, we can understand how the basic emotion of greed naturally injects itself into the whole economic structure of life and how difficult it is of control. Yet until this baser, more primitive side of man's nature is greatly moderated, there is danger that any economic reform, any attempt at ameliorating the faults in our economic institutions, will meet with failure. For no institution can rise above the character of the men and women who constitute it.¹

¹ "You and I know that the same greed which caused the depression is still operative in the business world," recently remarked the head of a cooperative milk concern. "The N. R. A. is trying to remedy things, but it has not gotten rid of this greed, which still makes trouble everywhere."

What, then, can bring about a sublimation of man's animal instinct of greed? For not until this is done can noble, equitable, and beneficent institutions be established. Man's emotional nature must be changed, sublimated, exalted. A world composed of the man-of-the-street as he is today cannot organize itself ideally. Whatever is attempted will fall under the stress of greed and exploitation. The cure of today will last only until another fever spell returns. The only permanent cure is a change in the motives and conduct of the individual.

What can bring about this change? Can we appeal to man's group intelligence and cause him to progress simply by the warning: "If you do not change your nature, you must suffer in the future"?

No, merely putting the facts before people is not going to idealize their mode of action. A higher force than this is necessary to change the course of this huge mass of humanity moving with such immense momentum. Such a force must needs be a spiritual force, something capable of penetrating the heart of man and transforming it.

We have seen this occur in the past epochs. We know that religion is the most powerful emotion that can grip the heart of man. We know that it is capable of possessing man's whole being, subordinating other emotions to their proper place.

Under the power of religion man becomes willing to forsake his personal aims and dedicate himself to

universal goals and ideals; willing to dedicate not only his intelligence and strength, but even his life. That is what is needed today, and many thoughtful people are seeing and saying just this.

5

Whence is this much-needed spiritual renaissance to be born? From what quarter of the horizon can its rise be expected?

There have been in the past marvelous movements of revival within Christendom.² These movements have shown power to greatly modify and improve the lives of their adherents and have been forces in the growth of humanitarian movements; but they have not been able to universally permeate and dominate the religious life of Christendom. Not for centuries—not since the Crusades, in fact—has there arisen any movement which could fire, fuse, and inspire the whole of the Church. I do not question the possibility, nay the probability, of the birth of other wonderful spiritual movements within Christendom especially inspired by the tremendous need of these times.³ But does it seem possible or probable that any of these movements would be able to universally revitalize Christianity in such a way as to restore its

² Cf. Chapter 5.

³ Cf. the Oxford Movement, led by Dr. Frank D. Buchman, who is quoted on page 78. For a thrilling account of this movement the reader is referred to "For Sinners Only" by A. J. Russell, a prominent British journalist who has caught the Oxford flame and written a most modernistic and powerful appeal to the religious life as expressed by Buchmanites.

primitive and original power? Can we expect a complete rebirth of Christianity?

Even if such an event could occur within Christendom, *there would still be left, however, the problem of how to unite the rest of the world with Christendom in one vast brotherhood.*

6

Let us realize that this expected spiritual renaissance must have the power to solve not only national but also international problems. It must, as has just been stated, unite the whole world in a deep sense of brotherhood and mutuality. It must overcome the emotions that lead to economic and military warfare. It must achieve a parliament of nations founded, by mutual consent, upon the power of international force as well as upon the power of international ideals. It must establish a single harmonious code of ethics. It must bring the world together upon one spiritual platform.

Just as Lincoln realized vividly that this country could not go on half slave and half free, so we must realize today that the world cannot go on divided into separate categories of living; separate and often opposing sets of morals; separate religions that, moss-grown with antiquity, are so overloaded with tradition that it seems impossible for them to come together in any active friendship or unity.

The world must unite under one religion, and

under one culture expressed in one universal language auxiliary to the native language of each nation.

7

Can we find any one of the great world religions which seems able to win the adherence of all humanity to such a universal program?

Naturally it is the desire of earnest Christians that their religion may accomplish this. Such has been the undying hope of Christianity ever since its origin. Yet that hope is much further today from a seeming possibility of fulfillment than it was in the first millennium of Christianity.

Up to the Middle Ages, and even beyond, Christianity was a religion of constant expansion. It grew until it possessed all the Occident. Then it spread, by colonization and propagation, over the whole of the New World. But subsequent attempts of Christianity to absorb the oriental religions have proved, if honestly acknowledged, a failure.

Upon Islam, Christianity has not made a dent. To the senior American missionary in Cairo some years ago, a Mr. Watson, I put the question, "How long have you been working in this field?" "Fifty years," he said. "How many Muhammadans have been converted to Christianity in that time?" "About one hundred and fifty," was his answer, "But even then you have to look out." "What do you mean?" "They are apt to become Christians for

material motives. Then at their death they recant."

An English historian has stated that there have been more Christians converted to Mohammedanism in the last hundred years than there have been Muhammadans converted to Christianity. *

Islam is itself a powerfully proselyting religion. It has a firm belief in its own authenticity, in its mission to conquer the world. Its propaganda in Africa has been so powerful as to practically absorb that whole continent into its fold. Conversions to Christianity have not been one tenth in number compared to conversions to Islam. Africa today, apart from the Europeans who dwell in it, is practically a Muhammadan continent.

Well, then, shall we say that Islam is the religion which may unite the world? Such an idea, emotionally distasteful to zealous Christians, is also, from the point of view of scientific possibility, quite improbable of achievement.

Is there any other established world religion that seems capable of bringing the world under its banner? Can Buddhism, for instance? Or any movement within Hinduism? Here we feel still greater impossibility of any such achievement.

8

The chief obstacle to the propagandic victory of one existing world religion over another is the need

*The greatest field for Muhammadan proselyting amongst Christians has been in Russia.

on the part of the missionary of the first religion to prove to the adherent of the second that, however good the latter is, the religion of the missionary is superior. In a few cases such a claim earnestly presented, and backed by a wonderful spiritual demonstration in the character and life of the missionary, is accepted and wins over a new proselyte. But in most cases the influence of loyalty, strong in human nature and more powerfully expressed in religion than in any other field of action, prevents an earnest adherent of one religion from substituting any other religion for his own. One might sympathize deeply with spiritual principles as expressed in another religion without caring, however, to abandon one's own native faith.

A close friend of mine at Robert College, a Muhammadan teacher there, used to feel indignant at the attitude of certain Christian members on the faculty who would remark, "Well, Hussein is reading the New Testament daily and is becoming a Christian." "Why should I be considered a Christian just because I read the New Testament and like it?" he said to me. "If they read the Qur'an, does that mean they are becoming Muhammadans?"

In Unitarian Churches there has been used for years a certain devotional book made up from the world's sacred writings. But because a Unitarian minister reads from his pulpit the words of Buddha, of Muhammad, of Moses, of Confucius, it does not necessarily imply that he has become a Buddhist, a Muhammadan, a Jew, or a Confucianist.

It is one thing to admire the ideals and spiritual

expressions in foreign religions, but it is quite another thing to change one's faith. A thousand emotional ties, both individual and social, hold one back from such a step.

True, people in dense ignorance, people living in poverty and degradation, can be won over to another religion by a form of proselyting which includes material as well as spiritual benefits. But such conversions are not symptomatic. They give no promise of universal extension.

Also races on a low plane of culture possessing primitive religions can be converted by persuasion or force to a higher religion, as in the case of the conversion of the American Indians to Christianity and the conversion of Africans to Christianity or Muhammadanism.

But proselyting movements between the great organized religions of the world have not been such a success as to indicate any possibility of world-wide religious unity being brought about by means of the predominance of any single one of these great ecclesiastical institutions, grown as they are into huge edifices each temperamentally incapable of yielding ground to others.⁵

⁵ Japan, a few decades ago, presented the extraordinary spectacle of a nation's avowedly examining the world's religions to see if another than its own might prove advantageous. Christianity appealed from a distance but upon close examination was found to be too disunited, too narrowly theological, and too little expressing its ideals in actuality. Japan therefore decided to revive its ancient Shinto as the new all-national religion.

China, the only other country which has offered real promise to Christian missionary zeal, is now—under the urge of nationalism and modernism—less susceptible to dogmatic Christianity than at any time during the past two generations.

Yet it is evident that religion is the only force capable of welding together into an amicable working unity all the nations, races, creeds of the world.

"Human power is limited in its influence. It can unite two persons, or two tribes, or two communities, or at the utmost two nations. At the same time it confesses that this unity is temporal and may be abrogated by the whim of either of the high contracting parties.

"But the divine power unites nations and peoples and cements them together in the bond of brotherhood and peace for ages and cycles. . . . There must needs be divine power for the accomplishment of this universal aim. . . .

"Save through this, ideal communication will not be made possible between the children of men. They may achieve a temporal union for a few years. Men may so compound the various ingredients as to be promiscuously mixed together. But there must needs be the solvent so that they may become perfectly blended and united. In the human world that solvent is the power of the Holy Spirit which will thoroughly mix and blend the different constituents and elements representing the various nationalities, religions, and sects." *

* 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The Divine Art of Living."

CHAPTER VIII

A New World Movement

IN THE midst of materialism more widespread and gross than the world has known since the Roman Empire; every man more or less a measure to himself; the great religions of the world so aged, so devitalized that they have very limited power to inspire ethical and spiritual living,—into such a world has come a movement which is pregnant with promise, the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

What are the characteristics of this movement which would lead one to see in it such promise of unifying mankind, as well as of individualizing spiritual accomplishment? Wherein is its rise comparable to the rise of great spiritual movements of the past?

The primary fact regarding the Bahá'í Faith is this:—like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam it claims to be definitely a Revelation. Herein lies its power. For though to the modern world the idea of a special revelation seems dubitable and hardly in accord with the dictates of science, yet every great religion has claimed to be just this and only because of such a claim has it been able to win the allegiance of its followers. This much, at least, is true—*no movement can possibly capture the heart and conscience of the whole*

world today unless it claims and demonstrates divine authenticity and authority.'

Secondly, the Bahá'í Movement has displayed an amazing power of inspiring self-sacrificing zeal in its adherents. This spiritual requirement is met as fully in the Bahá'í Movement as it has been met in the Judaic, the Buddhist, the Christian, and the Muhammadan religions. Religion without ardor is inconceivable. For the very essence of religion is the spiritualization of the emotions; the welding of them into one white heat capable of melting all the lesser contrary moods of human nature into a standard of character so lofty that it sheds a light, as it were, upon the lower ways of man. And without zeal religion can make no headway. In their early stages all religions meet with opposition, persecution, martyrdom. Only through zeal can the early adherents of a religion hold fast. In the course of its history since 1844 the Bahá'í Movement has paid a heavy toll of martyrdoms. Its followers have lost their property, their family, their lives. Sons have been cruelly tortured and butchered before fathers, and fathers before sons. All told, the blood of some twenty thousand martyrs has fertilized the soil of the Bahá'í Movement.

Thirdly, the Bahá'í Movement has definite spiritual, ethical, and collective doctrines. Its spiritual doctrine is simple, easily understandable, and entirely compatible with science. Its ethical principles for the individual are lofty and compelling. For collective humanity its program is so comprehensive

and yet so practical as to compel the admiration of statesmen, educators, economists, philosophers—in fact, of every thoughtful person.

The New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh displays a uniquely universal power of appeal. It reaches people of every class, of every degree of intelligence or culture. Already it includes among its adherents great statesmen and one world ruler. It appeals to the Occidental scholar or business man, as well as to the untutored peasants of Asia.

The Bahá'í Faith, like all great spiritual forces, shows the power of annihilating prejudice and of uniting members of different religions, different races, and different nations into one living brotherhood. This is the kind of miracle of which the Bahá'í Movement boasts. It bases its proofs, not upon miraculous births or miraculous deeds of its founders, but upon miracles in the transformation of human character, especially in the way of abolishing prejudices and emotional barriers. It is bringing together Jews, Zoroastrians, Muhammadans, Christians, Buddhists, Confucianists—welding them into an organic whole, a living, breathing body of brotherhood and love.

Lastly, the Bahá'í Faith shows the power of gripping the heart and changing its beat. It transforms human nature, sublimating and spiritualizing the human qualities. It has produced many saints. Its rank and file are superior in their personal morals, in their unselfish consideration of their fellowmen, and in their devotion to great principles and ideals.

2

The great success of Bahá'í missionary work has been due to the fact that no one is asked to abandon his own religion in order to become a Bahá'í. The Bahá'í propagandist, because he does not have to argue the inferiority of other religions, avoids arousing a spirit of combative ecclesiastical loyalty on the part of those to whom he preaches, of whatever religion they may be.

The Bahá'í theology is extremely simple and rational—that Divinity in its infinite essence is unknowable to man and indescribable; that Divinity can, however, communicate with man; that the world religions are authentic messages and revelations from this Divine Source; that Truth has revealed itself periodically, and will continue to do so, through great Teachers and Founders of religions; that the Bahá'í Faith is one of these periodic revelations, its purpose being to complete the messages and aims of all the existing world religions and to bring to pass a universal and ideal civilization upon earth.¹

3

It is chiefly because earnest and expectant adherents of existing world religions see in the Bahá'í Faith the natural fulfillment of their own religious purposes that they are attracted to it. Those who believe in prophecy find in the Bahá'í Movement ful-

¹ The Bahá'í Movement has no clergy, and specifically forbids the acceptance of money for spiritual teaching.

filment of their own Messianic expectations (which exist unfulfilled not only in Christianity and Judaism but also in Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Muhammadanism). Those who are skeptical of prophecy yet find in the Bahá'í Movement such enrichment of the spiritual life and such a noble platform dedicated to the unification of humanity and apparently capable of bringing about such a unification, that they welcome it as a reinforcement to their own spiritual or humanitarian ideals.

Thus the Bahá'í missionary can do what no other missionary can. He goes among various races and religions and wins adherents to his cause without attack, without invidious comparison, without offense to the sensibilities and loyalties of other religionists.

4

In their essence all religions are one. Spiritual Truth cannot, indeed, be different and conflicting. The aims of all the great prophets were one: to bring human beings into the Divine Consciousness, to advance their spiritual development, and to effect better conditions of organized living.

Most of the differences that now exist between religions are due to the human speculations which have crept in. True religion is unifying in its effect; but the devices of human thought tend to enclose the kernel of every religion in dry husks, and it is this theologizing metaphysical tendency of man that causes differences and separations.

That this is true is apparent from the processes that go on in any given religion. In Christianity, for example, we have the three great churches: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Protestant. Within the Protestant Church alone we have some two hundred sects. Buddhism also has been broken into numerous sects. Muhammadanism, unified more than any other great religion, yet has its two great schisms of the Shi'ites and Sunnites as well as many minor sects.

What is all this division due to, but to the speculative tendency of human thought? Certainly it is not derived from the intention of the Founders.

Nor can the great Founders of religions be supposed to exist in any sort of rivalry one to the other. Their purpose is one. Their devotion to Divinity is one. Their devotion to humanity is one. There can be no possibility of rivalry between these great Souls whose first requisite is abnegation of self, whose words and deeds are guided by divine inspiration, and whose lives serve no other purpose than to mirror Divinity to man.

5

Whatever differences there are in the legalistic teachings and precepts of the Prophets are due to the fact that every religion is obliged to be somewhat opportunist if it would seize the heart and consciousness of the epoch into which it is born. There must be some adaptation to the contemporary degree

of evolution. For example, had Christianity appeared in the time of Moses it would not have won strong adherence from Jews or from other racials. And Christ himself did not attempt specifically to teach the abolition of slavery, the abolition of war, or the abolition of wage chattelism; for these doctrines would at that epoch have made no headway. Again, were Muhammad to have completely forbidden polygamy and to have offered the savage and warlike Arabs a religion based upon love and forgiveness of one's enemies his message would have made no headway.

The physician prescribes and administers remedies that the patient can stand. There are no absolute standards in remedial work. What will cure one person will kill another. The same is true of spiritual doctrine. It must always be compatible with the capacity of the people to whom it is given.

But the spiritual teachings of the Prophets all agree and can be summed into the brief commandment of Jesus (which He himself quoted from a former prophet): "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and love thy neighbor as thyself." It is only to their formal task of better organizing human society that the founders of religion bring a modified message suited to the time and place.

6

Today, when science has so much expanded the mentality of man; when religions of the past have

ameliorated his manners and stimulated his conscience; when international intercourse has made apparent the impelling need of a world brotherhood,—now can be declared in explicit terms directions for world organization and a new international development of humanity such as have never been given in previous epochs.

So the Bahá'í Movement appears, upon sympathetic study, as the great keystone to the arch of human progress; the fulfilment of the dreams of all the prophets; the Utopia which philosophers have visioned; the Golden Age, the Millennium, the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Can the Bahá'í Movement indeed fill out this ideal pattern *with a living force*? Unless it can, it need make no claim upon investigation or belief. There would be no persuasive power, no obligation to allegiance, in a world order which could not demonstrate an actual ability to remake humanity on higher levels.

CHAPTER IX

A World-Wide Appeal

LET US at this point sum up our investigation of world conditions and world needs. We find that the world is in a chaos because the baser elements of man's emotional nature are become the cause of national and international disintegration in every phase of human living. We find that politico-economic plans expressing lofty humanitarian ideals fail to bring complete and permanent solution to world problems because, although they can reach man's intellect, they cannot universally inspire willing loyalty. We find that there is no force capable of molding the universal will of man into ideal behavior patterns except the force of religion, because religion is the only thing that can sublimate sufficiently man's motives and elevate his will above the plane of self-seeking, egoistic and aggressive conduct. We find meeting the imperative need of the world today a world movement which shows the power of attracting to itself all races and all creeds and of uniting them into a practical working brotherhood.

A world religion is imperatively needed today. Such a religion, however, must be reasonable; must be in complete harmony with the findings of modern science; and must demonstrate a catholic and universal power capable of inspiring men and women of every race and every type.

How the Bahá'í Movement appeals to men of many different races and creeds is best demonstrated in the words of some of its adherents in different quarters of the globe.

For instance, here is Chikao Fujisawa who for three years was a member of the Secretariat of the League of Nations in Geneva and subsequently for six years held the Chair of International Politics in the Kyushu Imperial University in Japan. His work in the League of Nations and his study of the world situation had convinced him of the inadequacy of human ideals to the achievement of world unity. Then he came in contact with the Bahá'í Movement, and he describes in an address given before a Bahá'í group in Tokyo the appeal which this world movement for brotherhood and universal peace has made to him:—

“We are witnessing humanity hopelessly in the grip of moral bewilderment, political chaos, and class antagonism, which threaten to undermine the very foundations of our civilization. In the face of these actualities, an easy-going popular belief that the realization of economic, financial and technical solidarity of the nations would *ipso facto* give rise to a golden epoch of permanent peace and sincere co-operation among mankind has suffered a miserable shipwreck and proved a naive illusion. The world war and the post-bellum international complications specifically bear witness to this blunt realism of our

day. Indeed, in attempting to combat the social maladies, a variety of ingenious remedies such as socialism, communism, bolshevism, and fascism have been proposed, but they have after all fallen far short of the final solution of the problem concerned.

"In a word, the unifying tendency of our modern material civilization cannot automatically call into existence the spiritual and moral unity of mankind. This is a great lesson fraught with far-reaching consequences and which we should take to heart very seriously. . . .

"The wonderful progress achieved in the realm of natural science and material technics has had no direct bearing upon the solution of the philosophical problem of subduing what we may call *ego centrism*, whose lamentable rampancy so far has hindered us from bringing about the unity of mankind on a firm moral and religious basis.

"From what precedes, it now becomes evident that the matter of great urgency for us all is reconstitution of the absolute authority of one single religion to be worshiped by all mankind, irrespective of the diversity of nationalities, races, languages, and traditions, because religion is the very key wherewith to disclose the otherwise hidden sanctuary of our genuine heart, through which only we can have communion with God, the originator of the universe.

"Why have the existent religions ceased to play the supreme role of leading us back to the stern presence of God? It appears to me that there are two causes answerable for this visible decline of re-

ligions: the one is sectarianism which is adverse to the inner nature of religion itself, and the other is the anachronistic narrow-mindedness of religious leaders. For many a century the great religious communities—Christian, Buddhist, Muhammadan, Hindu and others—have not only existed indifferently side by side, but also they have been in constant hostility and strife one against the other. Besides, what has rendered the situation worse is that each of them has become split up into a large number of sects, which are often bitterly opposed to one another. It goes without saying that this phenomenon has considerably discredited the past religions and deprived them of their original spiritual force. Secondly, religious teachers have shown an exceedingly bigoted and narrow-minded attitude toward the achievements of modern sciences and often betray a hardly justifiable disposition in blindly condemning those who wish to refute candidly such a fantastic story as the passage from the Bible according to which the world was made in six days by the hand of a personal God. It is obvious that true religion will never come into conflict with science, for the plane of the religious world is situated much higher than that of the scientific world. I believe personally that science is not merely reconcilable with religion, but also it should serve as the most powerful means of carrying into effect the religious ideal on earth.

“We have waited long for the advent of a new all-embracing religion which would be able to fittingly meet the requirements of the times, and this

ardent desire was at last fulfilled in the person of Bahá'u'lláh, a great modern prophet who appeared in Persia sounding his mighty trumpet call to afflicted humanity.

"Bahá'u'lláh's sublime mission was to recover the unity of all mankind through God. He conveyed the following message with regard to the future of mankind: 'All nations should become as one in faith and all men as brothers; the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened, diversity of religion should cease and the differences of race be annulled. . . . These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease and all men be as one kindred and one family.'

"As a means of promoting religious unity he advocated above all the utmost charity and tolerance as being conducive to overcoming ego-centrism of all shades, and he earnestly called upon his followers to consort with the people of all religions with joy and gladness.

"In connection with the desirability of stimulating a close cooperation between the Occident and Orient, he refers to the value of modern scientific civilization as follows: 'In these days the East is in need of material progress and the West is in need of spiritual ideal. It would be well for the West to turn to the East for illumination and to give in exchange its scientific knowledge. There must be this interchange of gifts. The East and the West must unite to give to each other what is lacking.' This union will bring about true civilization where the

spiritual is expressed and carried out in the material.

"Thus, the spiritual unity of mankind must first of all be guaranteed and then contemporary material civilization instead of continuing, as at present, to weigh heavily upon us, will turn out to be the most efficacious device to translate into reality the divine will of the Absolute.

"Thus, there is no wonder that the Bahá'í Movement is bound to sweep the most enlightened strata of society in every country."

3

In China, leaders with vision are proclaiming the value of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for their own country as well as for the whole world. Chan Ming-Shu, Governor of Kwangtung Province in 1930, has stated: "I believe Bahá'u'lláh was a Prophet, and China has need of a Prophet in these days. Such teachings at their lowest estimate could not harm any nation and at their highest they could do a great good in China and in every other country. No nation is more fitted to receive these teachings than China, for the base of Chinese civilization is universal peace. Just now we are going through great disturbances, but when China is righted and we are on an equal footing with other nations, China will take her place in all international welfare."

Dr. Y. S. Tsao, former President of Tsing Hua University, one of the keenest educationists in China and a distinguished writer of Chinese affairs, says:

"An analysis of Chinese culture shows that the Eastern philosophers when in trouble dig deep down into their souls. This Bahá'í Movement is a new way of 'digging down' and the teachings supply the help they are seeking. China is calling, in fact the whole world is calling, for Light. That is why people are taking such an interest in these Bahá'í Principles and the books explaining them. There is a need, there is an approach, and there is a fulfillment. This is a new message of great value; it is liberalizing, quickening. It makes religion more dynamic to solve world problems. For all this there is a need, and the deep thinking men of China all realize this great necessity; for we cannot go back to the old stereotyped, half-dead creeds. This Bahá'í Movement supplies a new ideal, and the world cannot win against it. The older religions may struggle on till they are dead: they may never attain to the goal of accepting this. The world may sink farther down until it drinks the last dregs, and then it will come up again. Chinese history has been like that. After a number of years of suffering some ruler or teacher appears and for several hundred years there is progress. Then a relapse comes, but in these modern times China cannot afford a relapse. Confucius himself taught that about every five hundred years or so a great teacher or reformer will come.

"These Bahá'í Teachings carry universality and supply the educational, the economic, and the social solutions for this new epoch. Not alone China, but the whole world needs these Teachings. China needs them specially because her leaders are groping for Light."

An American Bahá'í traveling in India on behalf of the Bahá'í Movement states:¹

"My journey through the south and heart of India was most fruitful, and the leading men and rulers of many different states are now studying the Bahá'í teachings. One of the foremost ministers of the Great Nizam of Hyderabad had heard of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and weeks before my arrival he was impatiently waiting for books.

"An official attached to one of India's greatest princes gave me every assistance in meeting those I most wished to know. When I told him the nature of my work, he explained, 'I too am a believer in Bahá'u'lláh, but I have never had the courage to openly admit it as it would mean absolute ruin overnight if it was discovered that I had embraced a new Revelation.' "

Dr. Auguste Forel, of Switzerland—leading world authority on the ant, psychologist, humanitarian, voluminous writer in three languages—at the age of seventy became a Bahá'í when he discovered how Bahá'u'lláh years ago had enunciated completely and powerfully principles for a cooperative world order such as his own soul had been envisioning and evolving. "The world organization of the nations is inevitable," he said to me in 1922, when

¹ "Through India and Burma," Florence E. Schopffocher—Bahá'í World, Vol. II.

I made a pilgrimage to Yvonne in order to interview the venerable scholar then in his seventy-sixth year. "*There is bound to be a world state, a universal language, and a universal religion.* The Bahá'í Movement for the oneness of mankind is, in my estimation, the greatest movement today working for universal peace and brotherhood." ²

6

Queen Marie of Roumania, while in this country, contributed a series of articles to American newspapers among which appeared the following striking tribute to the Bahá'í Cause:

"A woman brought me the other day a Book. I spell it with a capital letter because it is a glorious Book of love and goodness, strength and beauty.

"She gave it to me because she had learned I was in grief and sadness and wanted to help. . . . She put it into my hands, saying: 'You seem to live up to His teachings.' And when I opened the Book I saw it was the word of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, prophet of love and kindness, and of his father, the great teacher of international good will and understanding—of a religion which links all creeds.

"Their writings are a great cry toward peace, reaching beyond all limits of frontiers, above all dissension about rites and dogmas. It is a religion based upon the inner spirit of God, upon that great not-to-be-overcome verity that God is love, meaning

² See "Man and the Ant," Stanwood Cobb, *Bahá'í Magazine*, September, 1924.

just that. It teaches that all hatreds, intrigues, suspicions, evil words, all aggressive patriotism even, are outside the one essential law of God, and that special beliefs are but surface things; whereas the heart that beats with divine love knows no tribe nor race.

"It is a wondrous Message that Bahá'u'lláh and his son 'Abdu'l-Bahá have given us. They have not set it up aggressively, knowing that the germ of eternal truth which lies at its core cannot but take root and spread.

"There is only one great verity in it: Love, the mainspring of every energy, tolerance towards each other, desire of understanding each other, knowing each other, helping each other, forgiving each other.

"It is Christ's Message taken up anew, in the same words almost, but adapted to the thousand years and more difference that lies between the year one and today. No man could fail to be better because of this Book.

"I commend it to you all. If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine."

7

In 1924 there was held in London a notable Conference of Some Living Religions within the British

Empire. Dr. Walter Walsh, in a sermon given in Steinway Hall, summed up his impressions of the week's conference:

"It is through the unity of the spirit exemplified in this Conference that the peace of the world will be finally secured.

"Of all the notes in the General Evangel, none has sounded sweeter and clearer than that uttered by Bahá'u'lláh and his successor, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose gracious, healing message some of us were privileged to hear from his own lips some years ago. The Bahá'i Movement occupies a foremost place among those new orientations which make for universal harmony and peace. It emphasizes the unity of the spirit of man, the unity of religions in their essential characteristics and principles, and it prophesies and prepares the way for the final unity of the races.

"Here is a highly devotional form of religion, offering full encouragement to the spiritual and aspirational side of human nature, but at the same time giving *dis*-couragement to its superstitious tendencies; a religion disclaiming supernatural sanctions, non-miraculous, ethical, pacifist, not in the political sense, but peace loving, humanist, universalist, yet withal profoundly spiritual—to such a religion the blundering blood-stained world may hopefully look for guidance and inspiration."²

8

An American business man, George Orr Latimer, who has devoted much of his time and energy to the

² *Bahá'i Magazine*, December, 1924.

spread of the Bahá'í Cause, states the world need of this quickening Faith:

"The body politic is sick on account of lack of altruism. The want of a common faith is the life-destroying ill of humanity at the present time. Everywhere, in the old world and in the new, man has become a worshipper of the idol SELF-INTEREST. Everyone is striving for self-advancement at the expense of his fellowman. Faith is blind and dying.

"What then is the faith of the future? It is not a mere confession. It is a profession and a practice. To the Bahá'í it is 'first of all conscious knowledge, and second the practice of good deeds.' It is confidence, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá points out: 'The greatest divine bounty is a confident heart.' It is assurance of a new heaven and a new earth for man. It is the vision fulfilled of that famous Italian patriot, idealist, and apostle of the new democratic evangel, Joseph Mazzini, when he declares: 'The first real, earnest religious faith that shall arise upon the ruins of the old worn-out creeds will transform the whole of our actual social organization, because every strong and earnest faith tends to apply itself to every branch of human activity; because in every epoch of its existence the earth has ever tended to conform itself to the heaven in which it then believed—in form and degree varying according to the diversity of the times—of the words of the Dominical Christian prayer: Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.'

"The new faith must withstand the hurricanes of skepticism, evolution, race riots, international wars, and religious enmities. The quickening power of the Bahá'í spirit already has accomplished the awakening of a new assurance in every one with whom it contacts. It produces severance from selfish motives; it supplies a complete attraction to spiritual attributes. It accepts the plan of God for man's practical and spiritual welfare as both workable and livable. It acknowledges the voice within but translates that voice into conscious action for the betterment of all humanity. It sees the vision of the heavenly kingdom established on earth as it should be today. It is the motive power of a new and radiant century." ⁴

9

Such citations could be continued, but these given are sufficient to show how strong is the appeal of the Bahá'í Movement to men of thought and ideals who earnestly desire and seek a remedy for the confusion and despair into which the world seems plunged. Whatever one's social or religious station has been previous to becoming a Bahá'í, whatever one's intelligence or degree of education, once a Bahá'í all are committed to the same great universal program for the unification and progress of mankind.

But it is not only to the intellectual that the

⁴ "Faith—A Profession," *Bahá'í Magazine*, Vol. XV.

Bahá'i Movement appeals. Let a peasant of Persia, of India, of China, illiterate and ignorant, become a Bahá'i, and he accepts the world program of Bahá'u'lláh and strives with all his power to aid in its establishment.⁵ From the depths of ignorance and provincialism he rises to a high plane of world citizenship by virtue of his adherence to this world movement. Those who have been atheists, attracted by the humanitarian program of Bahá'u'lláh, gradually come to accept also the religious doctrine—simple and scientific—of the Bahá'i Movement. Those who have been narrowly credal and dogmatic in their religion broaden out, because of the Bahá'i Movement, into an appreciation and understanding of all the world religions.

Thus actual brotherhood is being created between Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Muhammadans and Hindus. The Bahá'i world traveler finds himself at home among every race and every creed. He is welcomed like a brother, has the privilege of entering intimately into the family life of Bahá'is the world over.

Is there any other movement in the world today that has proved itself so capable of uniting men of various races and creeds, of bringing into one common fold the scholar and the peasant, the religious zealot and the liberal, the capitalist and the laborer—and uniting them in a powerful working organization which strives for the peace, the prosperity, and the progress of the world?

⁵ A humble Jewish artisan of Hamadan, Persia, upon becoming a Bahá'i, was the means of bringing into the movement the leading Rabbi and half the Jewish population of the city.

CHAPTER X

The Universal State

LIKE every religion, the Bahá'í Cause has both an individual and a universal message. Its teachings for the individual concern the perfecting of character, the development of spiritual aspirations and strivings, the attainment of a closer fellowship with spiritual realities and powers. In its universal aspect the message of Bahá'u'lláh is an inspired and perfect plan for the organization of humanity into a world state^e founded upon a new and universal religious consciousness and a realization of human brotherhood. Universal peace is to be maintained by a world court backed by a league of nations.

It is the Great Society that the Bahá'ís seek to found. To this high purpose they dedicate their lives. And they strive to spiritualize their own natures not so much for the sake of eternal blessedness as for the sake of gaining power and ability for the creative work most vitally needed on earth today—that of transforming human institutions into more noble patterns.

This ideal presents a powerful appeal to all types and classes, of whatever race. Here is something which stirs all that is generous and noble in human nature; something that calls forth those hidden energies in the depths of man's being which can be realized only in the expression of lofty ideals and which

strengthened by divine force, can become powerfully effective in the building of nobler institutions.

2

In 1867 Bahá'u'lláh, from his prison cell in Akka, managed to send forth a call to the great rulers of the world inviting them to arise for the establishment of universal peace and a universal civilization. At about this time he also outlined the plan of a league of nations with proportionate representation, and a world court backed by the force not only of international sentiment but of international concerted action.

Woodrow Wilson, destined to go down to posterity as the initiator of the League of Nations, was well read in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá, whose books he frequently perused at his bedtime reading hour. Was his League of Nations, so similar to the plan of Bahá'u'lláh, derived from these readings in the Bahá'í literature? Or was there already a plan forming in his own soul which these writings confirmed and strengthened?

3

The ideal of an international "Parliament of man" has at last been put into concrete form. We have an actual League of Nations and a World Court. But their power of functioning is as weak as that of our own Continental Congress. There is a vast difference between the League of Nations of Woodrow Wilson as a political plan for the world,

and the brotherhood confederation of man as designed by Bahá'u'lláh.

The present League of Nations is a praiseworthy effort to arouse and crystallize public opinion everywhere to the point of employing organized international sanctions for the sake of preventing war and maintaining peaceful and just relations between nations. But this method of achieving an effective league of nations is impossible, as human nature goes today, because of the nationalistic suspicions, jealousies, hatreds, and wilful aggressions.

The whole fabric of human society, politically speaking, is woven out of the strands of brutish emotions. Nowhere yet has there been any attempt toward applying the Golden Rule to international policy, or of maintaining in the intercourse between nations even the ordinary standards of human relations.

The present pattern of international commerce and politics is based too much on selfishness, nationalistic pride, and aggressive exploitation to permit of an effective league of nations with universal disarmament to the point of a minimum force needed for internal law and order.

4

The great inequality in the natural distribution of minerals and raw materials necessary for industrial civilization causes every great power to deem it essential, for its prosperity and safety, to preempt an ample supply of these basic materials. A

nation's successful existence, as the world is organized today, becomes very precarious (especially in case of war) if it has no national sources of supply of iron, coal and oil. Countries which have abundant supplies of coal and iron have thrived under the modern industrial régime, and no country of importance could afford to see itself cut off from such supplies. Many other minerals—copper, aluminum, magnesium, zinc, tin, and less known minerals used in alloys and in electrical apparatus—are needed in modern industrialism. Also, each nation must see itself assured of adequate supplies of cotton, wool, and rubber, as well as of basic agricultural products. It is such needs and considerations as these which motivate much of the aggressiveness and militarism that is still left in the world.

If the world, however, were organized on another basis than it is at present, it would be entirely possible for nations to exist without possessing any of these raw materials and yet be in the utmost condition of prosperity and safety. Even today certain small countries whose neutrality and inviolability is practically guaranteed, such as Switzerland, need have no concern as to the supply of basic materials, for they can purchase these in the world market at any time.

The World State as outlined by Bahá'u'lláh is a world free from tariff walls, free from selfish nationalism, free from aggressions; a world whose prosperity depends upon an international exchange of raw materials and manufactured goods as untrammelled and friendly as the exchange which now

takes place within the boundaries of each individual nation.

5

The United States presents the remarkable example of forty-eight sovereign states between which there is no obstructive or aggressive rivalry. No state seeks artificially to bolster up its industrial and commercial life by means of protective tariffs against other states. Since tariffs are specifically prohibited between the states, it has become necessary for each state to develop to the fullest its natural resources and to base its economic prosperity upon its own natural advantages, whether these be agricultural or industrial.

New England, for example, without coal, iron, or cotton, achieved notable prosperity in manufacturing commodities which necessitate the use of these raw materials. To do this it is necessary to import coal, iron, and cotton. But New England has not felt itself to be at any time in danger of poverty or destruction because of the lack of these basic commodities among her natural resources.¹

¹ When cheap labor and the juxtaposition of iron, coal and cotton in certain Southern States threatened the success of her cotton mills, New England industrialists used their ingenuity to develop types of manufacturing in which their skilled operatives could successfully compete even against the lower wages of the South. When the depression came, it found New England, because of her recent efforts in thrift, in ingenuity and in diversification of manufacture, the best prepared of any section of the country to meet hard times. Had New England been able to erect tariff walls as an aid to Southern competition she would have grown weaker, not stronger, industrially.

Similarly each section of the country has developed according to its own natural resources and abilities. There is no dangerous jealousy between the states. True, each state boasts of its prowess and advantages, deriving a proud satisfaction from the wealth of its natural resources, the beauty of its scenery, the industry and culture of its citizens. In this vying with each other there has never been any danger of conflict and war. It is a friendly rivalry in which notable achievement in any one state, instead of being a detriment to other states, becomes an advantage in the way of stimulus and example.

The colonial fear that in case of a constitutional union the larger colonies such as New York and Pennsylvania would dominate the smaller colonies—a fear vivid and realistic enough to remain for some years a major obstacle to the forming of our Union—has not been confirmed by experience. The greatness and prosperity of New York has never been any danger to the prosperity of Rhode Island. Nor, as the colony of New York greatly feared, have the smaller states, because of equal senatorial powers in Congress, proved any detriment to the welfare of the larger states.

Thus we have in the United States of America a practicable and approved pattern for world federation.

6

In America, it is true, we have a fairly homogeneous population speaking the same language and

held together by the same national ideals and by the realization of a common destiny. But how can one form a world state out of the many nations so diverse in race, in religion, in language, in morals—with no sentiment of common destiny, of a community of interest? What can displace the present negative emotions of distrust, of jealousy, of fear, of egoism, of jingoistic pride and aggressiveness; substituting for them those more peaceful emotions and motives such as have guided the destinies of the American people in their marvelous federation of states?

It is plain that some force greater than is functioning at present must intervene to make this magical change and bring all the peoples of the world into an adequate realization of their interdependence—into a vivid sense of community of interest and of actual brotherhood.

There must be developed a new type of nationalism; an enlightened generous-hearted nationalism which rejoices in the prosperity and progress of other nations at the same time that it strives mightily for the prosperity and progress of its own people. One for all and all for one—that must be the motto of the future world federation. *From this new cosmic mutuality and altruism will result an enhanced and universal prosperity.*

7

It would be difficult to establish an effective sense of brotherhood between the various races and na-

tions while many diverse and in some cases aggressively competitive religions and sects divide the allegiance of mankind. Just as no force is so strong in creating ties of brotherhood as that unity which results from a common spiritual communion, so no obstacle to harmony and unity are so insuperable as violent divergencies in religious thought and practice.

Closely bound up with religious differences are differences of morals and customs. A people, for example, who base monogamy upon religious teachings and convictions cannot easily comprehend and tolerate a people with whom polygamy is religiously sanctioned, even though sex morality may be high among the latter group. So in a hundred other ways folk customs tracing back to religion and supported by all the force of ecclesiasticism thrust a sharp dividing wedge between normal human affinities and sympathies.

8

Even differences of language affect adversely the psychology and practice of human associations. It is almost impossible to feel consanguinity with one who speaks a language which one cannot understand. If this forms a barrier among the educated, how great an obstacle it is among illiterate peoples!

Conversely, unity of language is a powerful and almost indispensable factor in creating a sense of unity. So well is this truth known to statesmen that language is used as a political instrument for the formation of a strong nationalism. The public

school system of the United States has demonstrated the miracle which only a common language can accomplish, that of forging a myriad of races together into one people.

Practically, diversity of language becomes an annoying impediment to international travel and commerce; to world-wide circulation of ideas expressed in literature or science; to international conferences of all kinds; to international broadcasting; to the international development of talking films; and to the effective operation of the Parliament of the League of Nations.²

But however necessary world-wide unity of language may appear to be, the present sense of nationalism—strenuously expressing a rivalry of cultures closely bound up with language factors—opposes a natural tendency toward the flowing together of languages. What force can operate to bring together all human speech and create that linguistic unity which legend reports the Almighty to have purposely disrupted in the days of ancient Babylon?

² In Europe and the Near East, French has been for many years a universal auxiliary language among the educated classes. By means of French I have been able to talk with nearly all the peoples of Europe; with peoples of the little Balkan States so divided by language barriers; and with Orientals such as Turks, Arabs, Persians, Syrians and Egyptians. I have learned much through the medium of this auxiliary language. It has enabled me to fraternize with peoples of other races with whom otherwise I could never have conversed. It has enriched my knowledge of the East, it has brought me understanding of foreign races, it has given me a sense of universal brotherhood such as I never could have gained without the enlightenment that comes from sympathetic conversation with members of strange races.

What can bring about these vast changes so necessary to the establishment of world brotherhood and a world state? Common sense may perceive the needs, but it cannot effectuate the reforms. For, as we have previously shown, intellectual arguments lack the persuasive and convincing force requisite for altering human behavior on any large scale.

Religion alone has the potentiality of changing psychic habits, of forging emotions to a white heat so as to fuse souls together.

The New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh solves all these difficult problems and removes every possible obstacle to world brotherhood.

For the purpose of cementing peoples together and facilitating world federation and a common world culture, Bahá'u'lláh includes in his world plan an international auxiliary language—either some existing language or an artificial auxiliary language such as Esperanto. The rulers of all the nations are to agree on such a universal language, which would become a required subject in the curriculum of all national school systems. Thus in a single generation the world would have a fully developed auxiliary language as a universal means of communication.

In the field of religion the Bahá'í Movement removes all barriers by establishing a universal faith not competing with the existing religious systems

of the world but turning man's universal consciousness of God toward the establishment of more perfect patterns of individual and group conduct.

Through the dogmas, the ritual, the ecclesiasticism of the established religions the spiritual teachings of Bahá'u'lláh penetrate to the very core and essence of religion—reiterating those simple truths which make for universal righteousness, for peace, for joy in the love of God.

11

Imagine a world bound together by one language, one religion, one code of morals and one government, into a great common culture. *Such is the Bahá'í World State.* Universal education, a universal curriculum, international exchange of commodities without tariff barriers, peaceful and friendly national rivalry, a world parliament to form international laws and a world court to enforce them, the maintenance of universal peace by means of an international police force, the sublimation of human energies from brutal expression in aggressive competition and world conflicts into more ideal channels of cooperation and harmony of interests—this is the World State in its simple and grand outlines as given us by Bahá'u'lláh.

But before this World State can be established there is one thing which must take place—the elimination of prejudice. Racial prejudice, religious prejudice, economic prejudice and political prejudice—all must go. But these prejudices, so deep seated in our emotional nature, how can they be overcome?

CHAPTER XI

“Love Thy Neighbour as Thyself”

HOWEVER much we may wish to strive for universal peace and the brotherhood of man, it is evident that these great and noble aims are impossible of accomplishment so long as prejudices continue to divide mankind—prejudices cultural, religious, racial, and national. Wherever striking differences exist between peoples—whether of pigmentation and language, of customs, of education and culture—there is apt to be a lack of sympathy, a lack of understanding, a lack of harmony. Deep-rooted prejudices formed by hereditary and social environment and strongly supported by tradition still remain—even in the enlightenment of the Twentieth Century—insuperable obstacles to world unity.

Prejudices are hard to overcome because they are seated in the emotional nature. Even the education and training of the intellect does not suffice to overcome these pre-judgments of others based not upon rational grounds but upon emotional reactions and traditions implanted in the course of the formation of man's emotional character. In such cases the intellect merely serves to rationalize the prejudice, to defend it, to justify it with apparently reasonable grounds.

Prejudices may be personal; or they may be community prejudices, national prejudices, prejudices embedded in religious teaching and tradition. Of whatever class they are, they tend to be handed down from generation to generation. Indeed there is no other way in which they can be maintained. Psychologists have discovered that children have no innate prejudices of a racial, religious or national character; and that they acquire such prejudices only by indoctrination and training.

Could this indoctrination—this hereditary handing down of traditional prejudice—be stopped, these world prejudices would soon disappear. But that is easier said than done. Since one cannot at one stroke eliminate the prejudices of the adult world, neither can one prevent these prejudices from being handed down to children who are constantly surrounded—in their homes, in their schools, and in the adult life around them—with some form or other of prejudicial indoctrination.

2

One of the simplest forms of racial prejudice is that due to the conquest of one people by another more vigorous and potent. The conquerors naturally tend to despise the conquered, especially if there are differences of language and religion. They consider subject races to be stupid and inferior creatures not entitled to esteem. They tend to hold them in a subordinate position in the community, to

impose menial tasks upon them, to make them "hewers of wood and drawers of water." If there is a difference of color, this may crystallize into a caste system.

If no wide difference of color, race, or religion exists, the conqueror and the conquered tend in time to coalesce; and prejudices gradually disappear. But if there is a wide divergence in religion, race, and color, the prejudices remain for generations, centuries, and even for millenniums, causing a segregation of the different races and becoming an effective barrier against unification.

In the Norman conquest of England the Saxons, retreating to rural districts, became a race of rustics; while the Normans, seizing the towns, became both an urban and a ruling race and held in great contempt the less sophisticated and to them stupid and unintelligible Saxons. Gradually, however, through normal intercourse and especially through the coalescence of the two languages, a complete unity came to pass.

The Turks, in the course of their widespread conquests, came to look down upon all their conquered peoples, whether Jews or Christians. These they called "donkeys" and held in contempt and subjection.

In Persia, since the Muhammadan Conquest, the Jews, Zoroastrians and Christians have been held in contempt and subjected to various forms of mild persecution. These subject-races have suffered under a social stigma so strong that they must be careful

lest their shadow fall upon the ruling caste of Muslims. The conquering race would not eat from the same vessels nor practice any social affiliation.

The caste system of India arose from the diversity of the races at the time of the Aryan conquest of India. Its purpose was to hold indigenous races in a subordinate position and prevent coalescence. These crystallized cleavages between the diverse races of India constitute one of the gravest difficulties under which this country labors today.

"There's the Afghan, and, as a highlander, he despises all the dwellers in Hindoostan—with the exception of the Sikh, whom he hates as cordially as the Sikh hates him. The Hindu loaths Sikh and Afghan, and the Rajput—that's a little lower down across this yellow blot of desert—has a strong objection, to put it mildly, to the Maratha who, by the way, poisonously hates the Afghan. Let's go North a minute. The Sindhi hates everybody I've mentioned. Very good, we'll take less warlike races. The cultivator of Northern India domineers over the man in the next province, and the Behari of the Northwest ridicules the Bengali. They are all at one on that point. I'm giving you merely the roughest possible outlines of the facts, of course. . . . Hate eternal and inextinguishable hate.'"¹

The superiority given the Western World in recent times, by the use of gunpowder and other advantages of modern scientific industrialism, developed an aggressive imperialism leading to the conquest and settlement of the New World and later to the conquest or domination of most of Asia and all of Africa. This all-victorious career of the West has

¹ Kipling, who knows his India, has one of his characters in "The Enlightenments of Pagett, M.P.," gives us this vivid picture of Hindu racial hatreds:

produced a superiority complex on the part of western imperialistic nations toward the conquered races. And today, when world events call for a change of attitude, it is very difficult for the nations of the West to rid themselves of long-rooted prejudices against Asiatic peoples who have been considered to be racially inferior because they have been in subjection or in military weakness.

More striking still has been the attitude of the white race in the United States toward the negro race. Here, in a country founded on the conception of freedom and equal opportunity, it has been possible to hold vast numbers of another race in slavery while at the same time defending this action by pious explanations regarding the relative destinies of the white and colored races. The basis and motivation of slavery was economic. But by a naive form of rationalism virtuous pretexts for slave-holding were established and the psychology of the slave-holders was crystallized to a point beyond possibility of argument or voluntary change.

3

Race prejudices due to such political or economic factors are very difficult to eliminate because they are founded upon man's most basic emotions of egoism and greed. The human mind is so formed as to avoid voluntarily facing a consciousness of guilt or wrongdoing. Therefore, if a man's course of action though ethically indefensible is self-ad-

vantageous, such action tends to become rationalized; that is to say, right-seeming motives for conduct are invented by the subconscious self and passed on to the conscious self which implicitly accepts these false motives as the true ones. It is difficult to eradicate such rationalized ideas, since they originate in man's deep-emotional or subconscious nature and are caused by self-regarding desires.

The whole attitude and aim of imperialism must be abandoned, it is clear, before the prejudices of race due to imperialistic conquests can be overcome.

4

Another great cause of prejudice is religion. Though a less potent factor than it was a century ago, religious tradition is still strong enough to influence the vast majority of the inhabitants of this planet. A foreigner of another religion is a "heathen," a "ghaour," a "white devil." That form of theology which teaches that one's own religion is the only true religion naturally condemns all other religions to falsity and their adherents to error. Such theological concepts effectively prevent any real understanding or appreciation of the foreigner's religion.

Competitive religions that are still active and aggressive arouse prejudice the most vividly. Thus ardent Christians of the doctrinal type have more prejudices regarding Muhammadanism than they have regarding Confucianism, for the reason that

Confucianism at present is not a virile expanding religion while Muhammadanism in many sections of the world is engaged in active competition with Christianity.

An earnest Christian and an earnest Muhammadan, if both are of the fundamentalist type, could argue for days at a time without making the slightest dent in each other's reciprocal attitude. The fundamentalist Christian claim that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, the sole Messiah, the unique Revealer of religion implies that Muhammad must be an imposter and the Muhammadan religion an invention of the devil. A pious Muhammadan, on the other hand, believes that Muhammad was the last of the prophets ("the seal of the prophets") and that Muhammad's religion supersedes Christianity; hence he looks with pity upon the Christians, who having a partial truth are unwilling to accept the whole truth.²

So long as earnest religious zeal burns in the hearts of fundamentalist adherents of these opposing religions nothing can ever bring them together—nothing, that is, except the transforming power of the Bahá'í Movement, which is miraculously uniting even the most zealous and fundamentalist followers of these two diverse and strongly competitive religions.

² The Muhammadan believes that although Christ was indeed a prophet sent from God, Muhammad was his Successor; and that the New Testament, though containing much truth, is a falsified document not to be considered as an authentic account of Christ's life and death.

5

A third and potent cause of prejudice is due to differences in customs and morals. A feeling of inherent separateness due to such differences is not without some actual foundation. It would be indeed difficult to unify and harmonize races of widely diverging codes of custom and morals. How, for instance, could a family strict as to sex morals venture to fraternize with another family which believed in free love? Close friendship would be impossible for fear of contamination. So, too, a people that are shifty and dishonest in their business dealings cannot expect to find friendship and affiliation from other peoples who practice higher ethical standards in their business dealings. It is apparent that world unity in its most profound sense cannot be established until there is one code of morals effectively holding the loyalty of all mankind. And this is just what the Bahá'í Movement brings about.

6

A very natural cause of racial prejudice, even among intelligent and well-meaning people, is the tendency to make wholesale judgments based upon a limited experience. Thus if in the course of travel we are duped by a member of a certain race, we are apt to classify this whole race as dishonest. If members of a foreign race prove unreliable all members of that race are classified as unreliable.

Even if certain unlikeable qualities do prevail very characteristically in certain races (and we must not forget that other races find in ourselves much to dislike) it is wrong to carry in our minds *wholesale racial judgments*. What we deal with in this world are individuals, and each individual should have a fair chance to prove and demonstrate himself to us regardless of his race, creed or class. Not to permit this is to act on prejudice.

7

One of the more innocent and less harmful expressions of nationalism is that national vanity which leads people to think and say that their country is the best in the world. It would be amusing if one could psychologize a large number of people of every race in the world and realize how strong this mental attitude is in them all.

This superiority-emotion of peoples for their native country is not founded so much upon an intelligent comparison of actual achievements as it is upon insularity; it is found most marked in races having the highest proportion of illiteracy, ignorance, and provincialism. Examine the historic literature and popular thought of such countries as China, Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet, and you will find that each conceives itself to be the center of the universe and its rulers to be the supreme potentates of the planet.

The same kind of unreasoning emotional cleavage

exists between city dwellers and rustics; between inhabitants of the mountains and inhabitants of the plains; between Semitic desert nomads and their compatriot urbanites.

It is natural, of course, that we should love our country; that we should think it a glorious country and wish it to be superlatively great. Indeed, it may be the best country in the world for us. But how can it be that in a world composed of some fifty countries each one of them can be the best?

This national vanity, empty-minded and ludicrous as it may seem, is definitely menacing and injurious when it leads to contempt and aggression toward other countries. It may even eventuate in the idea of beneficent imperialism—a very dangerous idea leading certain countries to feel that the more of the world they conquer and rule the better off the world will be.

Thus even a seemingly innocent habit of racial vanity may become a threat to world peace; in its mildest form, it leads to ungenerous and inharmonious comparisons. It must be classed as a negative emotion, since its effects are the opposite of constructive.

All this talk about racial superiorities and inferiorities—so far as the native gifts of intelligence of each race is concerned—is irrational, modern science tends to show. *There has not been found any distinct difference as to intelligence in the races of the world.* In fact, intelligence tests and other evidences point to a normal and equitable distribu-

tion of innate intelligence and ability throughout all the races of the world. The causes of the existing vast diversity in races are differences in natural and human environment, in training, in racial ideology, in nationalistic aspirations and ideals.

8

Since the causes of prejudice lie chiefly in the self-regarding emotions, it is evident that until man's nature is dominated by altruistic emotions these prejudices cannot be overcome.

We cannot eliminate prejudice and leave nothing in its place. Something else must be substituted, or else new prejudices will arise. The emotionally egocentric and intellectually analytical factors of human nature tend always to discriminations which lead to unkind and unsympathetic judgments. Thus even if all the prejudices in the world were by some miracle eliminated today, unless the hearts of men were changed new prejudices would arise tomorrow.

There is only one thing that can wipe out existing prejudices and prevent new ones from forming—a loving charitable heart that instinctively goes out in kindly thought and deed to others. Such a heart exists only in those who are spiritually attuned to the great Heart of Love.

Yes, religion is the only power capable of overcoming the vastly entrenched force of prejudice—that innate tendency of man's mental and emotional nature to set himself and his country above all

others and to inordinately glorify his own folk-ways and distinctive culture.

9

The Bahá'i Faith specifically attacks prejudice of all kinds. It condemns all emotional expression which tends toward separation and inharmony. It preaches sympathy, understanding, and love for every race.

Man must set the world and its needs above even the love of one's country. "Glory not in this," said Bahá'u'lláh, "that you love your country, but rather in this, that you love mankind." National pride and glory are not to be condemned so long as they lead only to friendly rivalry, emulation, and co-operation. But that form of nationalism which accepts the slogan "My country right or wrong" as an excuse for jingoistic attitudes falls woefully short of the ideal that Bahá'is strive for.

In its brief history the Bahá'i Brotherhood has shown a marvelous power of wiping out strong and deep-seated prejudices. This miracle is especially noteworthy in the Orient where traditions and habits of hatred are so strong. How is it that in a single generation this movement has been able to bring together into loving comradeship and brotherhood Muhammadans, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians—races which had lived hitherto segregated from each other by social and religious barriers of the strongest kind, peoples between whom misunderstanding and hatred were universally prevalent?

The Bahá'í Movement has accomplished this miracle not simply by urging people to be kind and to develop their higher emotions; nor by a gradual process of education and enlightenment leading them out of the unreasoning prejudices of the past. No, it is not by such means that millions have been brought into harmony and love. It is rather by the proclamation of a spiritual message which is accepted by all its adherents as divinely revealed and authoritative.

Once the Oriental gives his heart to a religion he dedicates his intellect and his full powers to it. His one aim is to carry out its precepts. It is thus that the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh has demonstrated the miracle of raising ignorant, illiterate, provincially-minded Orientals in the twinkling of an eye, so to speak, to the plane of world citizenship, transforming narrow concepts of religion and race into broad ideals of world brotherhood and peace. Occidental Bahá'ís, too, lend willing and glad obedience to these spiritual precepts validating and enabling the efforts of all who work toward the glorious goal of universal peace and the unity of mankind.

10

Some years ago in Constantinople I met with a group of Persian Bahá'ís on their way back to Persia from visiting their leader at Haifa. There were in this group, traveling together in the closest

friendship and love, Muhammadans, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Jews; and meeting with them from Constantinople an Arab, a Turk, and an American. Here was a most diverse group as regards race, nationality, and religion, consorting together in the utmost brotherhood and love. One of the Persians, a youth with a white cloth wound around his tarbush (evidence of his being a theological student) said to me with tears in his eyes as he grasped my hand and held it firmly in both of his: "My brother, my brother! Just to think! Six months ago if I had had to shake your hand I should have thought myself contaminated. I should have spat on the ground in disgust at having to shake hands with an infidel. And now the Bahá'í Faith has made me see you as a brother. What a miracle this is!"

And truly it was. Yet this sort of miracle is taking place in similar groups all over the world.

11

This effective spiritual brotherhood between the different religionists and races of Persia was not established without struggle, danger, and persecution.

At first it was very difficult for Bahá'is to put into practice their ideals of peace and brotherhood. For a Muhammadan of the dominant race to be seen admitting to his house in social fellowship a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian was to bring down a

mob upon him. His house might be destroyed by fire, he and his family massacred. Brotherhood had to be practiced in secret and very cautiously. Yet—and here is the important thing to realize—*it was practiced!*

Bahá'is do not state a creed, and then neglect the deeds that give expression to their creed. Brotherhood is such an integral part of the Bahá'í doctrine that to avoid or neglect its practice is an unpardonable fault. Therefore the Baha'is of Persia felt an irresistible urge to prove the power of their faith.

As the Bahá'is increased in number in any given town they found it advisable to withdraw to a new quarter of the town where Muhammadan, Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Bahá'is could live side by side and practice fellowship without attracting the rancor of the more conservative elements of the city.

Only since the rise of Riza Shah to power has it been possible for Bahá'is to congregate openly together. Because of the order established by his tolerant and just rule it is now safe for Bahá'is in most of the cities of Persia to hold their meetings and festivities together openly in private gardens or even in a public park; it is not necessary for them to creep to their common destination singly and in the dark, as in former days.

Anyone visiting Persia will see today this miracle of brotherhood in active expression. He will find Persians of every race and creed—where hitherto mutual hatred and intolerance had existed—living

together in utmost harmony and love. Nothing short of a divine power working in the heart of men could have effected such miracles of brotherhood—miracles which carry us back in imagination to those thrilling days when the message of the Nazarene united Jew and Gentile, proud Romans and despised Barbarians, bound and free, in loving Christian fellowship.

"The teachings of the Holy Books need a divine potency to complete their accomplishment in human hearts. In Persia Bahá'u'lláh reared and taught souls, established a bond of affiliation among various peoples, and united divergent religious beliefs to such an extent that twenty thousand devoted ones sacrificed themselves for the Cause of God in the glorious unity of martyrdom. No differences whatever remained among these blessed souls; Christians, Jews, Muhammadans, Zoroastrians were all blended, unified, and agreed through the potency of his heavenly power. Bahá'u'lláh not only proclaimed unity in love; he established it."^a

12

And so this first step toward world peace and a new world order is being established in the hearts of men throughout the world. Brotherhood must first be felt before it can be expressed in organization. The evidence of the power of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh actually to create the feeling

^a 'Abdu'l-Bahá—"Promulgation of Universal Peace."

and expression of brotherhood all over the world is one of the most powerful factors in its appeal to people of understanding, sincerity and idealism.

How great is the need for some such force to rend asunder the veils which the world over have concealed men from each other's understanding; and to cut from human feet those tradition-forged shackles which have held them from walking out to meet their brothers of different race and creed!

If we would have world brotherhood, it is only in the world of the soul that this unity can be achieved. Sympathetic charity and activating love—these are unifying spiritual qualities which emanate from the soul and function on a plane higher than that of the discriminative and separative intellect.⁴ And these spiritual qualities can be established only as religion brings to the individual an inspiration, a faith, a power which lifts him above his own lower nature and helps him to attain to his best self.

13

Religion always has shown a cohesive force, a power to bring diverse races together and to cause them to cohere in one civilization and culture. Buddhism did this. Christianity did this. Muhammadanism did it most strikingly in its early centuries.

"The Holy Spirit is the only power which will

⁴ "No sects exist in Love. Buddhist, Muhammadan, Christian—these are not Love's divisions—Love knows how to embrace, not to differentiate."—Toyohiko Kagawa, "Love, the Law of Life," John C. Winston Co., Phila.

ultimately unite and harmonize the races and nations of the world. The Cause of God is the only panacea which will heal for all time to come the social, economic, and political diseases of mankind. The revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is the tree which will send its outstretched branches to all the countries and under whose cool shade all the religious sects will gather to fraternize and associate with one another.

"The world is full of ideas but they are either fleeting or profitless or impractical or limited in their influence, or confined within a narrow scope. The beaming shafts of the light of cosmic ideals must pierce through the hearts of men and the power of the Holy Spirit is necessary to carry into execution these noble thoughts of the age.

"Human power is limited in its influence. It can unite two persons, or two tribes, or two communities, or at the utmost two nations. At the same time it confesses that this unity is temporal and may be abrogated by the whim of either of the high contracting parties. But the divine power unites nations and peoples, and cements them together in the bond of brotherhood and peace for ages and cycles." ⁵

14

When people of diverse races and temperaments are brought together in a social or religious unity

⁵ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "The Divine Art of Living," pp. 153-154.

the charm of the association is enhanced by the very differences that exist, just as in marriage opposite temperaments are said to produce the greatest happiness and vitality in the mating.

Thus one discovers, in the course of world travel, that association with people of greatly different temperament and background is most fascinating. To find oneself actually in a situation of sympathetic exchange of ideas with individuals of foreign and exotic races is an exhilarating type of experience which does not occur in intercourse with one's own countrymen. The greater the difference of race and culture, the greater is the romance of this intercourse.

And so it will happen that when prejudices are removed, when barriers are broken down and the peoples from opposite ends of the earth come together in harmony, a cosmic and vivid emotional experience will take place. Hearts will become aflame with the marvel of this experience of unity.

Love is a creative force. It builds up. The spirit of universal inter-active love will assuredly erect upon the foundation of world brotherhood marvelous institutions of culture, of art, and of religion.

CHAPTER XII

Occident and Orient

OF ALL the prejudices which separate peoples of the world, the most deep-seated and difficult to remove are those which still create a barrier between the Orient and the Occident.

Ever since the dawn of history this barrier has existed. The Greeks, who initiated civilization within the continent of Europe, created a very different culture from that of the Orient. They laid the foundations of the scientific-realistic trend of Occidental thought. They laid the foundations also of democracy both social and political, and of the rights of the individual. These distinctions between the Orient and Occident have remained and grown even stronger as centuries have added to the civilization built up in Europe.

From the time of the Renaissance Europe has made tremendous headway in science, far outdistancing the Orient. The scientific energy of the Western World eventuated in the discovery of steam and the invention of machinery, creating the industrial revolution and that technological civilization which today places the West a millennium in advance of the East so far as practical arts of living are concerned.

The East, meanwhile, has continued along the even tenor of its way, content with the same cus-

toms, practices, and utensils that were known when history first dawned. Travel through Asia and you will find people plowing with the same kind of plows, reaping with the same kind of reapers, sailing in the same kind of boats, and eating out of the same kind of dishes as they did five thousand years ago.

Yet in the realm of the spirit Asia has created a wealth such as the West seems incapable of achieving. It is significant that all the great world religions have been born in the Orient. The Occident has contributed nothing creative in the way of religion. Its energies seem to be more practical, more materialistic.

2

From the time when the Greeks repulsed the Persians in the latter's endeavor to extend their world empire into Europe, the Bosphorus has remained an impassable gulf separating Asia from Europe. This gulf has been crossed at times, but figuratively speaking it has remained a barrier separating the world into two very different compartments.

In spite of Rome's conquests and rule in certain Asiatic countries, at the fall of the Roman Empire civilization in the Near East relapsed into the ancient Asiatic folkways. On the other hand, the barbarous tribes of Europe which were conquered by the Romans permanently assimilated the practical scientific civilization which the Greco-Roman world evolved.

No religion, even, has succeeded in bringing about a unity between the Orient and Occident. By some peculiar destiny Christianity, although born in the Orient, has flourished only in the Occident. This Occidental trend of Christianity was not due to any lack of opportunity for penetration into the Orient. The message of Christ was carried eastward as well as westward from the birthplace of its Founder. In the same century that it was converting whole tribes of Germanic, Slavic, and Celtic races it was penetrating with early missionary zeal into Persia, India, and China. It took strong hold and eventually won complete success among the races of Europe; but it only languished in Asia, even where it managed to get a slight foothold. And thus, although Christianity became a powerful factor of unity between European peoples, it has failed to become the means of uniting Europe and Asia.

Buddhism, on the other hand, spread only eastward from the birthplace of its founder. Thus, although it created a great and unifying civilization in eastern Asia, it has done nothing toward uniting Asia with Europe.

Muhammadanism, rising later in the stage of history, has proved a powerful unifier of Asiatic and African peoples but has failed in its attempts at the conquest of Europe.¹

On the basis of past history and present prob-

¹ The history of the spread of the world's chief religions would almost seem to indicate an affinity and destiny of certain religions for certain races.

ability, it is seriously to be questioned whether any one of these great world religions can ever hope to bridge the gulf between the Orient and Occident, uniting all in one fold.

Yet nothing short of religion can possibly unite the Orient and Occident. So different are these two concepts of life, and so deeply founded in the religious temperament is the whole ideology of the Orient, that no wholesale rapport can be expected except under the tutelage of religion.

3

For over two centuries Europe, by reason of greater racial energy and greater military power due to the application of science to warfare, has subdued and ruled most of Asia. But this imperialistic rule, beneficent as it has been in many ways, has not tended to unite the East and West. Enforced contact between Orientals and Occidentals, though it has interjected Occidental customs and standards of living into Asiatic urban life, has not succeeded in changing the Oriental ideology. It has left the vast country-side, the village life of Asia, untouched. And Asia is ninety percent rural and only ten percent urban.

As for the unifying effects produced by commercial relations between the Occident and Orient, present conditions show a weakening even of these ties. There has been a great change in the psychology of Asia toward Europe and America since the World

War. A situation which has been going on for many generations and was apparently capable of remaining forever in *status quo*, suddenly has changed. All foundations of Occidental rule and domination of Asia are crumbling. No longer are Orientals submissive in spirit toward Western militarism and imperialism. No longer do they hold a friendly attitude toward Occidental culture and civilization. There is throughout the world's largest continent a great Asiatic Renaissance, a rise of intense nationalism, a growing hostility to Westernization, an immense folk movement of "Asia for the Asiatics."

Hence it is apparent that the mere course of events is not bringing about unity between the East and West. The trend of evolution, though it points in the direction of eventual world unity, gives no evidence of any immediate unity due merely to the intercourse and contact of peoples. In fact, the present situation is less promising in this direction than was the situation of two decades ago.

4

Now one of several things can happen as between the Orient and the Occident. The Occident may continue to dominate the Orient as it has in the last few centuries, ruling it by force but not reaching its heart or changing its pulse. No unity would be established in such a situation. But it is highly improbable that such a situation can continue. Asia will not long be ruled by any force applied from the outside.

Secondly, there is the idea in some quarters that Asia might in her turn become imperialistic and embark upon vast enterprises of world conquest. There is a possibility in this direction, but not any great probability.

Thirdly, the Orient and the Occident might continue each in its own way, segregated from each other as in the past. This, however, seems an untenable hypothesis because of the speed and efficacy of intercourse and communication; because also of the pressures due to economic and cultural interdependence. No, the world cannot go on existing as two isolated groups, one of which is technological, materialistic, and progressive; and the other illiterate, primitively agricultural, and non-aggressive. There is no possibility of world harmony and world stability in such a situation.

. A fourth possibility, and this seems to be the only solution of the problem, is the coalescence of the two civilizations, their merging to form one world culture. This seems not only wholly desirable, but inevitable.

5

The truth is that each civilization needs greatly what the other has to give. Neither is perfect in itself. In temperament the Orient has many of the so-called feminine qualities—intuition, patience, emotionality, love of beauty; while the Occident has the so-called masculine qualities—aggressive-

ness, practicality, kinetic energy. Just as neither man nor woman is self-sufficient nor perfect as a separate human being, but only when their qualities merge and coalesce, so the East and the West will reach their highest fruition only in a union of their qualities.

The West is in sore need of the spiritual teaching and stimulus which the East has to give. Where would the West be today without the benefits of an Oriental religion conferred upon it two millenniums ago? The most admirable fruitage of contemporaneous Occidental civilization may be traced directly to seeds planted by Christ. The Orient has many riches of a spiritual nature to give us. Its whole philosophy of life, its practice of living, is superior to our own.

The Oriental knows how to wrest happiness from life, regardless of circumstance. But the Occidental, seeking insatiably to exploit environment and circumstance for the purpose of procuring happiness, seems ever unsuccessful in his attempts. True, he wields a remarkable power of molding external forces to his will and has conquered everything in the world external to himself; but he has not learned to control and sublimate his emotions to the point of securing that joyousness of life which is normal to the Oriental. Perhaps the Orient can teach us the secret of its happiness.

On the other hand, the Occident has rich gifts to convey to the Orient. The deliberate continuous search of Nature; the discovery of laws by which

man can dominate the physical universe and re-form it to his pleasure and convenience; the development of technology and of modern industrial skill, these are things that the East greatly needs to learn.

The present economic adversity has struck the world just in time, it would seem, to save the East from a too hasty adoption of modern industrialism, with all its faults. What a pity it would have been had Asia succumbed to the mad Occidental chase after material goods, abandoning its age-old wisdom and serenity of living. But now the East has the laugh on us. "Where is your vaunted prosperity?" it can say. "To what has your industrialism led? Your superhuman efforts, your exhausting toil, your stress of life, your mad rush on subways and elevateds—where have they got you? What have you done with all your vaunted machinery and your speedy methods of transportation? Have you arrived at the land of happiness and contentment?"

America today is much more ready to accept the simple philosophical life of the East than ever before in its history. There will be from now on enforced if not voluntary leisure, and more distinct limits to personal fortunes. The future will see us more happy with less toil; contented with fewer things; dwelling joyously on our own simple homesteads; cultivating gardens of flowers, vegetables, and fruit where we spend some of our leisure time to the advantage of health and happiness.

In the portended change of the American tempo and acquisitive habits of life, the Bahá'í Movement

is destined to play a leading part. The effect of its spiritual teachings and of that fragrance of the Orient which it exhales will serve to ameliorate and dignify the life of Occidentals. Indeed, it is already evidencing this power.

6

All Occidentals who have lived long in Asia testify to a certain striking effect produced in their character and development by contact with the Oriental mind and temperament.² Conversely, Orientals who go to the Occident for education and culture gain inestimable benefits in the way of a development which they could not obtain in the Orient. A marvelous civilization will arise when these two cultures are fused into one. Then will come the perfect civilization which the world has long waited for.

But how is this to be brought about? Only by the power of a world religion which can control the heart and consciousness both of Orientals and Occidentals. In the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh we find just such a power. We have here a movement that is capable of uniting the Orient and Occident.

The Oriental who becomes a Bahá'i finds it enjoined upon him by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to acquire knowledge, to develop science to the utmost, to progress along the most modern lines. Thus

² My own personality, I feel, was inestimably benefited by a sojourn in the East, and I am growing hungry for Eastern ways of life again.

millennial barriers of prejudice against Occidental civilization are swept away.

Universal education is enjoined as a religious duty. Girls are to be educated as well as the boys; for, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, the female, due to the contacts of motherhood, exerts more influence over the growing generation than does the male. The Persian Bahá'is, wherever in sufficient numbers, establish schools for boys and girls. In many such villages the only girls' schools existing are those conducted by Bahá'is.

The feminist movement in Persia is progressing chiefly under the impulse of Bahá'i precept and example. Other movements of progress in Persia rely for their furtherance upon Bahá'i leadership; for the Bahá'is of Persia are, as may be supposed, the group best educated and most imbued with principles of progress.

7

The Bahá'i Movement, therefore, tends to make both Oriental and Occidental more universal in type as it fuses them together into a conscious love and brotherhood.

"In the western world, material civilization has gained the highest point of development, but divine civilization was founded in the land of the East," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912 in addressing the Church of the Ascension in New York City. "The East must acquire material civilization from the West,

and the West must receive spiritual civilization from the East. This will establish a mutual bond.

"When these two come together, the world of humanity will present a glorious aspect and extraordinary progress will be achieved. This is clear and evident; no proof is required. The degree of material civilization in the Occident cannot be denied; nor can anyone fail to confirm the spiritual civilization of the Orient, for all the divine foundations of human uplift have appeared in the East. This likewise is clear and evident. Therefore you must assist the East in order that it may obtain material progress. The East must likewise promulgate the principles of spiritual civilization in the Western world. By this commingling and union, the human race will attain the highest degree of prosperity and development. Material civilization alone is not sufficient and will not prove productive. The physical happiness of material conditions was allotted to the animal.

"But the honor of the human kingdom is the attainment of spiritual happiness in the human world, the acquisition of the knowledge and love of God—we pray that God will unite the East and the West in order that these two civilizations may be exchanged and mutually enjoyed. I am sure it will come to pass, for this is the radiant-century."

The dynamic spiritual power of the Bahá'í Movement will, it is anticipated, sweep away in course of time all barriers between these two great divisions of the world and fuse them into one living unity.

Thus Bahá'is the world over look forward to the inauguration of a noble culture upon this planet—a culture based upon foundations of science on the one hand and beauty, joyousness, and spirituality on the other. *"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."* This apt line of Kipling has become universally known. But not so many know the second line of his couplet—*"Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat."* Is it possible that the Earth and Sky so stand today?

CHAPTER XIII

Science and Religion

THE present conflict between science and religion is unfortunate, for humanity cannot advance normally with this gulf separating the rational function of the soul from its devotional function.

What can heal this breach? Men of science are already showing a willingness and even a desire to penetrate into the deeper mysteries of the universe and to realize the Infinite in terms of spirit as well as in terms of matter. Religion, for its part, must show a willingness to acknowledge the plain truths of science and to reconcile itself cordially, harmoniously, and whole-heartedly to the evident truths gleaned from the physical investigation of the universe.

2

The quarrel between science and religion is primarily the fault of religion—or, let us say, of those theological traditions and superstitions which too often parade in the name of religion. This superstitious attitude of the Church, based upon blind dogmas and creeds, for centuries completely blocked the advance of science—that free investigation of the universe which was the creation of the Greek spirit.

But science persisted with much the same spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to truth, of willingness to face martyrdom, which religion has shown. It persisted and won out. Men of great intellect set themselves to find the causes of things, the meaning of natural phenomena. And they discovered not only what they were seeking, but something even more marvelous. Through finding the causes of things they learned how to control things—how to rule nature and exploit her for man's welfare and pleasure.

It is this latter power which has given science its preeminent authority today—winning awe-inspired respect in the minds of the laity and invading formidably the terrain of religionists. For however much religious fanatics may dispute scientific assertions as to the *cause of things*, they are helpless before the prestige which science constantly gains by its ability to *control things*.

It is the marvels of scientific discovery and invention which have given science such a hold on the mentality of the civilized world today—a hold with which religion finds itself helpless to cope.

I recall the argument advanced by a scientific materialist from New York who once discussed with me in a *kayak* on the beautiful sunset waters of the Bosphorus this conflict between science and religion. "Science," he said, "has brought more of benefit to humanity in the last hundred years than religion has brought during all recorded history." And I found it hard to combat his statement.

Certainly religion must demonstrate results as immensely valuable to humanity, both individually and collectively, as those science has achieved, before it can regain its prestige. Theoretical claims are not enough. Science has produced seeming miracles of enormous benefit to man. Religion must produce its miracles, also, in the sphere of human conduct and human organization. Can religion successfully meet this imperative challenge of today?

3

If science, indeed, could guarantee the continuance of comfort, happiness and security to all individuals in increasing and progressive degree, man would perhaps feel no need for religion. But science stands today convicted of gross failure to establish any such security or stability upon the face of the earth. *Science cannot control man's emotions.* And man's destructive emotional nature has a constant tendency to disrupt, to break down all that man's constructive intellect through science builds up.

4

Today men of thought in all countries stand baffled before the great problem:—*What can establish and maintain universal welfare on this planet?*

Science gives us the means whereby to live, but not the goals. It contributes inestimable materials

but no values. Its dreaded power, like the strength of Jason's warriors, can through the quarrelsome mettle of humanity easily be turned upon itself in forms of racial suicide.

Science is so neutral as to morals, so ineffective as to character that we have the spectacle of a Leopold and a Loeb, brilliant students in university science courses, perpetrating crimes of the most horrible character.

Science can control experiment; can control matter; but it cannot control the soul of man. Scientists themselves, as well as religionists, are perceiving this.

Said Professor John Scott Haldane, veteran Oxford scientist, before a meeting of the Christian Evidence Society of London:—

"I am a member of no church because there is so much that I cannot accept in the theology associated with existing churches. It is, therefore, as a free thinker that I am addressing you; though one whose reasoning has led him to a clear recognition of spiritual reality as the only reality.

"The ordinary world which we see and feel around us is a spiritual world of values, in which we find the manifestation of God. We find it in our comradeship with others, in the honest and diligent carrying on of our occupations, in our care for one another, in public services and in our joint recognition and furthermore of truth and beauty.

"If we lose sight of this spiritual world, we have lost sight of what is alone ultimately real in our-

selves, and we are not realizing ourselves. Science by itself cannot guide us, since from its very nature it does not deal with values which are supreme.

"Science is not enough. Reason in its highest form as religion, and real religion extending into every part of our lives, is what the world is most in need of, and particularly just now, with old theological beliefs, which to a large extent embodied religion, along with old scientific beliefs, as well as old political beliefs, disintegrating in every direction."

5

Science, in the prime of its power, not only has failed to train and sublimate man's emotional nature but it has actually demoralized man's religious consciousness by taking out from under him all the foundations of religious belief. That many of these foundations were theological dogmas rather than spiritual truths is the one benefit accruing to humanity during this drab process.

Religion, the most conservative department of human life, has even up to today been proclaiming and attempting to justify dogmas based upon an ancient cosmogony thoroughly unacceptable to man's present scientific reasoning. Therefore every educated individual has been obliged to choose between two courses—either to separate himself from the claims of theology or to deny the claims of science. In whatever way individuals, each in his own way,

have been solving this problem, the patent fact is that the Church has been losing ground before the inroads of science.

This weakness of the Church before the invading power of scientific knowledge and scientific method of approach to truth is apparent not only in America and Europe but also throughout Asia wherever modern education and science have come in contact with old dogmas and creeds. *There has been a universal world-wide tendency for higher education to result in positivism, materialism, a denial of religion as reality.*

Thus youth—not only throughout Christendom but also throughout Confucianism, Buddhism, and Islam—are departing from the creeds of their fathers and are ranking themselves with the great army of free-thinkers who are bent on scientifically discovering the universe.

If there is to be a reconciliation between science and religion, it is plain that religion must come more than half way. It must abandon its false doctrines and its limited creeds, its superstitious ideas derived from an ancient theology and cosmogony wholly irreconcilable with the nature of the universe as we know it today.

There can be but one Truth about the universe. Science cannot discover the universe to be one thing, while religion discovers it to be another. There is only one Universe. That Universe, when understood in its reality, should appear the same both to scientists and to religionists.

It is an Oriental, not an Occidental, who today utters the strongest note for the reconciliation of science and religion, denouncing in the severest terms those religious traditions which oppose themselves to the known truths of science. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, commenting in his Paris talks on this subject of science said: "Ali the son-in-law of Muhammad said, 'That which is in conformity with science is also in conformity with religion.' Whatever the intelligence of man cannot understand, religion ought not to accept. Religion and science walk hand in hand, and any religion contrary to science is not the truth."

Again, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, speaking in Washington in 1912, said: "Science is an effulgence of the Sun of Reality, the power of investigating and discovering the verities of the universe, the means by which man finds a pathway to God. All blessings are divine in origin, but none can be compared with this power of intellectual investigation and research which is an eternal gift producing fruits of unending delight. Man is ever partaking of these fruits. All other blessings are temporary; this is an everlasting possession. Even sovereignty has its limitations and overthrow; this is a kingship and dominion which none may usurp or destroy. Briefly, it is an eternal blessing and divine bestowal, the supreme gift of God to man. Therefore you should put forward your most earnest efforts toward the acquisition of science and arts. The greater your attainment, the

higher your standard in the divine purpose. The man of science is perceiving and endowed with vision, whereas he who is ignorant and neglectful of this development is blind. The investigating mind is attentive, alive; the mind callous and indifferent is deaf and dead. *A scientific man is a true index and representative of humanity*, for through processes of inductive reasoning and research he is informed of all that appertains to humanity, its status, conditions, and happenings. He studies the human body-politic, understands social problems, and weaves the web and texture of civilization. In fact, science may be likened to a mirror wherein the infinite forms and images of existing things are revealed and reflected. It is the very foundation of all individual and national development. Without the basis of investigation, development is impossible. Therefore seek with diligent endeavor the knowledge and attainment of all that lies within the power of this wonderful bestowal."³

7

It is evident that today, if never before, religion must be reasonable. It must convince the intellect as well as the heart. Today the intellect is king, and its desires and needs must be respected by religion.

It is a distinct cause of chronic psychological disease to a spiritually inclined individual—this daily

³The Promulgation of Universal Peace.

battle between science and religion; this endeavor to hold to a religion which violates reason or to hold to a reason which violates the creeds of religion. Herein man is torn as between two opposing forces. No harmony can be established until this battle is ended. Yet no truce can be declared in the battle between science and religion until the demands of the reason are satisfied.

If the harmonization of religion and science is needed in the Occident, how much more it is needed in the Orient—where ignorance and superstition hold men still in such thrall that their lives are lived at the level of the beast—captives to, rather than intelligent rulers of, nature.

In the Orient the battle between science and religion is hardly yet begun. How much Asia, for her material welfare, needs the scientific attitude! And yet it is unfortunate that the Oriental, in his quest for science, should discard his spiritual attitude toward life.

8

Harmonious cooperation between science and religion is one of the leading principles of the World State of Bahá'u'lláh, Who gives strong praise to the man of science as the investigator of reality and holds him up to the respect and reverence of mankind.

In fact, there is no religious movement in the

world today doing more to reconcile and harmonize religion with science than is the Bahá'i Faith.

"Between religionists and scientists there always has been warfare for the reason that the former have proclaimed religion superior to science and considered science opposed to religion. For this reason strife and enmity have existed between them. Bahá'u'lláh declared this to be a mistake, for religion is in harmony with science and reason. If it be at variance, it proceeds from the mind of man only and not from God and is therefore unworthy of belief and not deserving of attention. The heart finds no rest in it and confidence is not established. How can man believe that which he knows to be at variance with reason? Is this possible? Is it possible for the heart to accept that which reason refuses? Reason is the first faculty of man and the religion of God is in harmony with it. Bahá'u'lláh has removed this form of dissension and discord from among mankind and reconciled science with religion. This is His unique accomplishment in this Day." ⁴

Because of its reasonableness, its strong defense of the scientific intellect, and its utter freedom from traditional dogmas such as make existing creeds impossible of complete acceptance by the scholarly mind of the Twentieth Century, the Bahá'i Movement makes a strong appeal to college youth the world over, who see in it a means of bridging the

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "Bahá'i Scriptures."

gulf between their intellectual and spiritual natures.⁵ Here too they find instead of ritual and ecclesiasticism a practical working religion embracing in its scope all the great humanitarian aims which today are enlisting the interest of idealists the world over.

Of what inestimable benefit to humanity, claim the Bahá'is, is a religion in which reason is reconciled with reverence; in which all the higher powers of man's intellect can be dedicated to noble goals for humanity, consciously supported and inspired by contact with that Divine Power which regulates the affairs of the universe.

True religion, they say, is as simple as sunshine, since it consists in availing oneself of the divine source of power and inspiration—a Source which, like the sun, is of unfailing and inexhaustible beneficence to all existing beings. And a prompt and valid solution to great world-problems is foreseen, when the scientific leaders of humanity dedicate their lives to the destiny and divinity of progress.

⁵ Two points in the teachings of the Bahá'í Cause prove especially satisfactory to men of intellect and of science:— the refutation of the validity of miracles as a convincing proof of religion, and the statement that God in His Infinite Essence is unknowable and cannot be grasped or comprehended by the intellect. Thus the chief obstacles to religion in the mind of the educated man—miracles and an anthropomorphic God which is the creation of man's imagination—are removed from the field of discussion

CHAPTER XIV

The New Economic State

THE world depression with its abnormal condition of unemployment has forced many people to think more earnestly about the functions of government than they have ever thought before. Is it the duty of the State to guarantee a livelihood to every individual? Or must the individual bear his own economic burdens unaided by the State?

Government in its early stages did little for the governed except tax them. In return for taxes drained from peasant toil, rulers returned few of these benefits which are deemed a necessary obligation of the modern State.

In the Orient, even up to the present, autocratic government has been distinctly for the sake of those who govern. The State has felt itself under no obligation to render public works and utilities as a return for taxation.¹ Its aim has been to extort as much money as possible from the governed, and this

¹ In Turkey, for instance, under Abdul Hamid no roads were made or even kept in repair. Bridges once fallen were never put up again, so that it became common word of guidance to travelers in Turkey to follow a road which crossed the river by a ford rather than one which crossed by a bridge. Even annual sums levied from the citizens of Constantinople specifically for the upkeep of the Constantinople bridges were spent on the personal gratifications of the Sultan and not on the bridges. In China, at the actual moment, taxation is in many provinces sheer exploitation and robbery on the part of the "tuchuns" or governors.

money has been used as private fortunes for the rulers. True, at times there have been benevolent rulers who have accomplished great public works, but they are striking exceptions. In general the masses have been the object of exploitation, not of benefaction.

2

It was not until the eighteenth century, even in Europe, that the concept was broached that government was for the sake of the governed and not for the sake of the governors. Since the revolutions in England which established true constitutional government, since Rousseau and the French Revolution, and since the founding of the United States and its Constitution—the evolution of government has been rapidly moving in the direction of benefits to the people.

But how far should these benefits go? The government should, of course, establish law and order. That, however, appears to be chiefly a benefit to the propertied classes. How far should government go in bringing benefits to the unpropertied class, the vast mass which constitute nine-tenths of all governed peoples? Letter and parcel post, roads, agricultural aid and information, education—these are some of the things that modern governments undertake. Some also undertake ownership or management of railroads, of telegraphs, of monopolies in certain lines of distribution. City governments es-

tablish and maintain those services which are necessary to group living at modern standards of hygiene and protection. They even undertake to wipe out slums and to create "the city beautiful."

Today we are brought face to face with an even more fundamental need. Should the State guarantee a livelihood to every citizen? Never before the great depression has the modern State ventured to undertake any such obligation. True, it has realized its duty to ameliorate the tragic results of great catastrophies which have for the time being deprived large masses of people of food and shelter, but it has done this chiefly in a semi-public way by means of organized private charity.

Today, however, one of the most serious problems confronting all governments is: What shall it do in the face of wholesale unemployment and ensuing privation?

It is evident that no government dare today allow large masses of its citizens to starve to death. And since the matter of unemployment enters vitally into the problem of maintaining individual existence, the State finds itself drawn inevitably into vast new fields of operation in which there exist few precedents or guides to action.

3

Twenty years ago one of the world's authorities in fiduciary problems, George E. Roberts of the National City Bank of New York, said to me: "It

makes little difference to the people what party rules, provided the economic life of the country is prosperous."

Now, for the first time in our history, the power of the government is projected into the industrial and economic life of the country, with the aim of restoring prosperity and establishing it on a stable foundation.

What we are developing in this country today is an Economic State in which the government assumes direct responsibility for the economic welfare of its citizens.

One of the most remarkable things about many governments during this crisis is the closeness with which they approximate the economic order of the Bahá'í State as projected by Bahá'u'lláh some seventy years ago.

A generation ago one could have enlisted little interest in or sympathy with the economic principles of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, for the reason that an economic state was contrary to prevailing ideas regarding the duty and province of government. Now that the pendulum has swung in the other direction; now that this as well as other governments is seeking to discover safe and efficacious ways of guaranteeing a living to every citizen—the economic plan of Bahá'u'lláh assumes import because of certain remarkable features which will stabilize industry and commerce and create a permanent world-wide prosperity.

It is not only the laborer who is experiencing insecurity today. White-collar men and coupon-clippers also are tasting the bitterness of poverty. The immense scope of the present depression has disillusioned the masses of the people as to the efficacy of thrift. Bank savings have proved no barrier to poverty. Fortunes in stocks and bonds which erstwhile yielded splendid incomes have become worthless as to current needs because no dividends have been forthcoming.

Thus today both the laborer and the capitalist (in the form of the investor from small to great) have found themselves in the same predicament. What can be done about it? There is widespread insecurity in the midst of a ridiculous plenty. We have within our country a surplus of raw materials, a surplus of labor, and a surplus of needs and desires. If these three factors could be brought together, all want would be abolished. Yet the whole situation waits upon the catalytic of money to perform this union. If these three factors are brought together without the medium of money, which is certainly possible, we have state socialism. To many this appears the ideal solution. It is not, however, the solution which the Bahá'í World State offers. The Bahá'í economic system is a controlled or balanced capitalism which permits self-interest to operate within restricted spheres.

Self-interest is still the strongest motivation of

effort and efficiency. Human nature as it is today and as it will be for thousands of years to come cannot act collectively without some scope for the profit motive. It is as idle to seek to abolish that motive as it is to seek to limit sex expression to the purpose of procreation. Human organized society must be based on reasonable grounds of human psychology.

But how can the self-seeking motives in the industrial and commercial life of the world be controlled so as to prevent the evils of present day individual capitalism? The control cannot be purely political for this reason—political organization is an expression of the people and a people who universally desire uncontrolled opportunity for the satisfaction of greed will find ways of violating or vitiating government regulation.

A certain measure of control must be contributed partly by popular opinion. The right kind of combination of government function and of a new economic consciousness will make possible the new economic order of the Bahá'í World State which may be described as a modified form of capitalism.

The Bahá'í State requires no one to serve without motives of personal reward. Self-seeking incentives are allowed still to operate, but within the practical range of mutuality as between individuals and between classes. It is to be a fifty-fifty proposition. All economic enterprise must be fair. It must be mutually advantageous and the rewards and profits must be equitably distributed as between the classes.

This great law of mutuality and equity is the only possible basis of security whether economic or political. Any government which desires stability must offer clearly perceived advantages to the vast majority of its citizens, and any government which would endure today must guarantee economic security. How is this to be done?

5

In the Bahá'í State there are four main provisions which will inaugurate complete equity and mutuality, as between labor and capital; and which will so spread the profits of industry throughout the entire population as to maintain a steady equilibrium between investment, production, and consumption.

The labor throughout all industry will share in the ownership, management, and profits of factories; and this, not by illusionary methods of stock purchase but by mere fact of workmanship. Thus labor will receive not only wages but also a large share in the dividends. In this way the profits of industry will be so distributed that consumption will always be able to keep up with production, and the recurrent chronic depressions of the past will be avoided.

For it is evident that one of the chief causes of this as well as of previous depressions is the *pyramiding of investment*. The capitalist does not usually consume all the profits of his industry or the returns from his investments, and a large part of

this capitalistic income tends therefore to be re-invested. This re-investment causes more factories to be built and more goods to be manufactured and placed upon the market. (For investment is of no value to the capitalist unless it produces dividends, and the only way investment can produce dividends is by selling goods or service at a profit.) Thus, as the process of dividend-drawing and re-investment continues, the point is inevitably reached, in every prosperity cycle, where there is a surplus of goods and a scarcity of consumer-power. But such a situation does not immediately halt production. For the pressure of great masses of greedy capital, like the pressure of mighty reservoirs about to burst, continues to flood an already saturated market with goods until an economic cataclysm occurs.

The solution for this is not, as the capitalist suggests, a complicated system which would attempt to restrain and regulate production, *but by the establishment of an equilibrium between the productive and consumptive powers of the nation.* This balance must be brought about by increasing relatively the wealth of the masses and decreasing relatively the wealth of the capitalistic class. Such an adjustment will be effected within the Bahá'í Economic State by the system of profit-sharing described above, reinforced by a system of income and inheritance taxes as described in the following paragraphs.

Sharply graduated income taxes will purposely prevent the accumulation of large fortunes. When

such a system of taxation is put into effect it will discourage men from even attempting to amass large fortunes; for it will not be of any advantage to earn enormous incomes of which the State will take the major part. Such a system of taxation, preventing huge aggregations of capital under individual or family ownership, will make a vast change in the industrial world, throwing open industry and commerce once more to the ambition of small operators and giving a greatly expanded opportunity to the average person.

Moreover, whatever fortunes are allowed to be accumulated within this modified capitalistic system will tend to be widely distributed at death, both by inheritance taxes and by principles of combined law and usage which will cause a wide division of property to all heirs, even to relatives of the third degree and to institutions of learning.

Hand in hand with this new industrial order will go a direct responsibility of the State toward every citizen. Everybody in the Bahá'í State is guaranteed a livelihood. The State assumes responsibility either of securing employment for the individual or of supplying him with the necessities of life. Thus no citizen of the Bahá'í State will suffer privation and want. Such a guarantee on the part of the State is an enormous responsibility and calls for a highly complicated form of human engineering. Already, however, we have seen the dawn of such ideas. The governments of the future will not shrink from this obligation, no matter how arduous or complicated is its application.

The Bahá'í principle of joint ownership of industry by capital and labor will help not only to prevent business depressions; but also to bridge the historic tragic gulf between capital and labor. As long as labor receives merely wages, it tends to be but a commodity bought by the capitalist and exploited for his own benefits. "You have abolished physical slavery," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an American audience, "but you have yet to abolish chattel slavery, the slavery of labor to the machine." Huge strikes, violence, disaffection, the paralyzing of industry and general chaos can only ensue from obstinacy on the part of industrialists and hesitancy on the part of governments to adjust the economic conditions in accordance with the dictates of justice and humanitarian ideals.

There will be no security to the individual or to the State until such economic justice is established. Education and general enlightenment are giving the masses everywhere the ability to know economic facts and to agitate for the rights of labor. If the wealthy classes assert only a will-to-power, be sure the masses will also assert a will-to-power which will not be satisfied with securing merely justice.²

The solution must be brought about not by vio-

²'Abdu'l-Bahá predicted that unless the interests of capital and labor were mutualized, there would occur a series of strikes in this country which would cripple production and paralyze our whole technological culture. Such an eventuality is still imminent, it would seem.

lence but by sympathetic cooperation on the part of capital and labor. "The capitalist will in due time," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "voluntarily accept those limits to his fortune and power which Bahá'u'lláh prescribes. He will of his own accord share his profits with labor. He will find actual joy in assisting the poor and in helping to establish a social and economic order which guarantees security to every individual."

7

Economic interchange between nations is facilitated and stabilized by laws of Bahá'u'lláh which virtually abolish tariffs. The whole world will eventually become one vast economic union such as the forty-eight states of the American Commonwealth now represent. Increased prosperity will result to all nations from this free and healthy circulation of goods. Just as the United States has demonstrated how great a factor of prosperity has been an untrammelled commerce existing between a hundred and twenty million people living in their respective forty-eight sovereign States, so the whole world will find for itself vast economic gain in an international commerce based upon universal peace, cooperation and unity.

8

Today no religion can thrive and hold the alle-

giance of the masses that does not show a deep concern for the economic problems that confront industry. Religion must offer ideal institutions based upon just and cooperative foundations, and it must moderate the expression of greed and exploitation in the economic life. *In reality greed is the only thing that can prevent economic prosperity in this age of science, invention, and technology.* Greed can always create obstacles to human welfare by obstructing the ideal expression and flow of economic forces.

It is not the invention of machinery but the economic organization which is bringing trouble upon the human race. Under an ideal economic organization machinery can be nothing but a means to universal comfort, security, and happiness. It will create new sources of pleasure and culture at the same time that it increases the amount of leisure for the individual. "The United States cannot yet produce more than the American people would like to consume," says the Brookings Institution in a recent research report. "The wants of the nation are large enough to absorb a productive output many times that achieved in the peak year 1929."

9

Just at the time when humanity needs it most, there has arisen such a religion of power—a religion which is fast spreading over the whole world, pervading every civilized country with its lofty ideals of social, economic and political justice. The World

Order of Bahá'u'lláh presents the perfect pattern for humanity—the pattern which will solve every social, economic and political difficulty—a pattern towards which the most advanced secular thought of the world is astonishingly tending.

But the mere pattern is not enough. There must be the acceptance and conviction, the obedience of humanity to these divinely inspired laws. It is here that the idealists, the leading thinkers of the world who are superbly progressing in vision and power toward a new world order, need the support of a great spiritual movement which has the potentiality of harnessing the vast majority of humanity to noble ends and of subordinating to the larger needs of the common good the rebellious and exploitive few who still remain self-seeking.

This cannot be accomplished in a moment, in a decade. But the beginnings of the new World State are already emerging from the womb of Time. Its consummation, its perfect working out must be the aim and effort of humanity for many centuries to come. Here is a vision, a task, large enough to command the admiration and zeal of every human being; large enough to absorb all human energy and lead it into the glorious achievement of a perfect civilization.⁴

⁴For further details concerning the economic and political principles of the Bahá'í State see J. E. Esslemont's "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era." Allen & Unwin, Museum Street, London, W.C.1. Price 2/6.

CHAPTER XV

Youth and the Modern World

IN THIS epoch of universal religious decline and moral decay the whole world is suffering from the effects of spiritual chaos. But mature age suffers less than does youth which is at the portals of life. For it is here, at the beginning of life's experiences, that mistakes are most far-reaching and that wrong-doing is most deeply tragic in its life-long results. Here, also, in this naturally turbulent period of life when the blood runs strong, when adventure and self-expression are the chief desires—here more than at any other period is needed the calming influence and sane direction of religion.

But what do youth find to feed these crying needs? They find an adult world materialistic, lacking in the consciousness of God; and if practicing religion at all, practicing it mostly in a merely formal way. They find religious doctrines so full of theological superstitions, so at variance with the known truths of science as to inspire little inclination toward the church. Education has still less to offer as regards a philosophy of life. For the colleges—with their questioning and skeptical attitude toward all things and their scientific laboratory methods which train to accept as truth only what can be physically proved—tend to make agnostics of youth.

Today, therefore, we find the young people either totally materialistic, having no consideration for religion and spiritual matters; or else if feeling a tendency toward religious life, doubtful and skeptical concerning established religious dogmas of the day, searching everywhere but seldom finding a complete spiritual satisfaction.

2

The result of this irreligious life on the morals of the rising generation is cataclysmic. Youth with its tendency to seek wide experience—with its drive toward adventure, its quest for happiness, its thirst for gratification of the senses—how can it guide itself safely through the many temptations which the world of matter offers the struggling soul?

Behavior has become to the youth of today merely a question of expediency. With pleasure and self-indulgence the chief motives of action, youth is prone to try all things in the hope of finding new pleasures, new satisfactions of the moment. With the aid of modernistic schools of psychology, restrictions are classified as harmful and are thrown aside. Hedonistic self-expression, the search for pleasure and happiness at any cost, what else is there but this basic desire of man's lower nature to influence the conduct of the youth of today?

Without the strong sanctions and authority of religion the ordinary precautionary maxims of age and experience count but little with youth. "Hon-

esty is the best policy," we are told. But is that true? How many grafters are thriving, high in popular esteem? How many business men of shady principles are eminently successful in the world's eye and able to enjoy all these comforts and luxuries which youth aspires to? If materialistic success is to be given a higher claim than character upon our esteem, then youth is justified in wondering whether honesty after all is the best policy.

Again it is said, "Be good and you will be happy." But youth is willing to try other paths to happiness than those which lead to heights of righteousness; and in its adventure into sensualism it finds that there are many pleasures from which it has been debarred by the code of ethics of the past. Why should these bars exist? Youth will have none of them. And adult warnings regarding future consequences are of little effect. For prognostications regarding the results of actions can be individually proved only by method of trial and error, and that is just what youth is endeavoring to do today.

Left without the guidance of religion,¹ without those sure principles of action which the great spiritual teachers of humanity taught us—the rising generation is embarking upon dangerous and catastrophic quests.

¹This is now the second generation of irreligion growing up in this country. The first such generation had a certain ethical momentum from their childhood environment in customarily religious homes. But the present generation of youth inherit neither religion nor ethics, for their parents have no spiritual beliefs to hand on to them.

In the midst of such a world, it is a most refreshing and hopeful sign to see a certain body of youth finding a moral conviction in the teachings of the Bahá'i Movement. The New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, appealing profoundly to youth because of its humanitarian principles, also is convincing on its spiritual side because of its complete harmony with scientific progress. Here is a reasonable faith—one not only consistent with man's highest intellectual development but offering to humanity solutions for its major problems such as even man's intellect alone is unable to achieve.

Into this great world-wide movement the youth of many countries, of many races, of many hereditary religions are throwing themselves with deep sincerity and with earnest endeavor. Here youth are finding again a solid foundation for life activity, a sure guide to conduct and to expression. Here they find motives higher than those of mere expediency. The eternal quest of the soul for beauty, guidance, and truth again finds assurance in the spiritual principles of revealed religion.

These groups of young people the world over are studying the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and are endeavoring to fashion their lives according to its pattern. Out of this earnest spiritual endeavor grows a character as beautiful as it is natural and wholesome—a character of purity, of integrity, of kindly service, of earnest responsibility both toward

the development of oneself and toward the advancement of humanity. Superb are these youths. In the hands of such, human affairs can safely be entrusted. Wise and learned in the learning of this world and dowered with a rich spiritual grace which reflects in all their acts, they are the salt of the earth.

4

Here is how a young college woman, senior in Leland Stanford University, views her life in its connection with the Bahá'í Cause:

"The Bahá'is are commanded to engage in the most strenuous endeavor, both mental and spiritual; our education may never be spoken of in the past tense; the lines laid down by Bahá'u'lláh stretch to infinity, and there is no profitable learning from which we are excluded.

"Everyone agrees that peace among nations is imperative, that castes and races must be reconciled, must heal the wrongs they have done each other; that universal education of a spiritual as well as material quality is essential; that true science and true religion are in harmony; that men and women are equal. . . . It is easy to agree with the Bahá'í principles, but not to obey them.

"The Bahá'is are those who, not content with mere agreement, spend their lives in striving to obey the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh; they have chosen a path which leads to martyrdom, to loss of fortune, to the constant setting aside of personal desires.

"This is a Cause for the courageous; for those who can give even their tired hours, their broken, reluctant bodies, in service; for those who can win victories and never see their laurels; for those whose hearts shall not waver, though all the heavens and the earth arise against them.

"Just as each Bahá'í has seen the dawn of a millennium in his own soul, has felt himself changing, developing, casually accomplishing what men hold impossible, so will the whole world find itself transformed, the old materialism pass away, the new spirituality be established."

A young Persian Bahá'í, carrying on University studies in Paris, writes as follows:

"When a divine Manifestation appears, His cause is at first hindered by the opposition of nearly all the world. The adherents of the old, crystallized order of things resist, with fear and hatred, the influx of new ideas and ideals and the birth of change. Therefore those who become pioneers of a spiritual springtide will have to meet an avalanche of trials, privations and martyrdom.

"History bears witness to the fact that the opening period of the Bahá'í Cause demanded a sublimity of sacrifice, on the part of a far greater number of its followers, than the initiation of any previous religion.² But with the plaster of their blood and the bricks of their bodies they well and

² Over twenty thousand martyrs gave their lives to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in the first few decades of this movement.

truly laid the foundations of that New World Order which is the Bahá'í Movement.

"This period is passing and Summer is at hand, the season of activity and construction, the opportunity for the unfoldment of every latent power and capacity among those who seek to carry on the great work so nobly begun.

"The responsibility for its continued progress and ultimate achievement rests, in a large measure, upon the Bahá'í Youth of today—heirs of a unique spiritual heritage. If we do not want the heroic efforts and sacrifice of those who have bequeathed to us this heritage to remain fruitless, we must be ready to follow in their footsteps, arise to serve, and never rest until the work is accomplished." ³

5

Of whatever nationality, race, or creed, these Bahá'í youths are bound together by the closest of spiritual ties into a universal brotherhood working whole-heartedly for the peace and progress and prosperity of all humanity. Never before in the history of this planet has so lofty a goal definitely inspired the vision and absorbed the energies of Youth. Unquestionably their influence will be felt as a rising tide in the affairs of nations!

³ M. Rocham—*Bahá'í Magazine*—March, 1934.

CHAPTER XVI

Christianity and the New World Order

WHAT is the relation of the New World Order to Christianity? The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are certainly humanitarian. They are such as will produce progress for the individual, for the State, and for the whole world order. But is this to be a religion in competition with Christianity? Does Bahá'u'lláh claim to be greater than Christ?"

Such questions as these were written to Abdu'l-Bahá in 1910 from the First World Missionary Conference then being held in Edinburgh, at a time when I was a guest of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Haifa. His Secretary showed me the answers which 'Abdu'l-Bahá had just dictated: "Bahá'u'lláh did not claim to be greater than Christ. The Bahá'i Movement does not supersede Christianity, but completes and carries out its meaning."

The Revealers of God's purpose to humanity, the great Prophets of all ages, says 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have not and never will be in competition with each other. For they have only one aim, which is to carry out the Will of God; and the Will of God is a Will of unity, not a Will of diversity in competition with Itself. It is inconceivable, therefore, that these great Souls who have the capacity for perceiving

and revealing the will of God should be in any rivalry or hostility one to the other. They are so impersonal in their aims as to be almost without personality. They are pure channels for the Divine force; and any difference or rivalry between them, such as exists between ordinary personalities, is sheer impossibility.

2

The Bahá'í Movement, like the religion of Christ, has but one aim—to establish the will of God upon earth, thereby bringing to pass that perfect civilization which has been named the “Kingdom of God.” It is apparent, therefore, that the Bahá'í Movement is not in any competition with Christianity, which is also seeking to bring about this same goal.

The Bahá'í Faith seeks no glory for itself. Its work and its power are above the limitation of names and categories. If a new world order of divine perfection should be established throughout the world by the power of the Christian Church, Bahá'ís would be the last to quarrel with such an eventuality.

In spite of the waning hold of Christianity upon the conscience of individuals and of groups, it is still exerting a great and splendid force in the world. The Church is still upholding sublime ideals of world peace and brotherhood.

There are churchmen who have a glorious vision on the international function of religion. A clear and powerful statement of the full obligation of the modern Church is given us by Reverend Daniel A. McGregor:—

“The Christian Church is not the palliative of international disorder, she is the new international order of God towards which all social evolution has been straining through the centuries, which has emerged into life in Christ, but which has not yet found its fullness. The Christian Church is a new creation; she is the new humanity of God. She is not as other groups are, but is called to the high destiny of bringing the nations of mankind into the Kingdom of God. National organizations and treaties may be temporary stop-gaps and make-shifts, the true home of mankind is in the kingdom of God. The Church has not sufficiently recognized her own high function. She has been content to be the Red Cross giving relief in the battle of life; she must rise to her true calling as director of the destinies of man.

“Nineteen hundred years ago the old nationalistic order of the Mediterranean world was passing away. Roads through Europe and trade-routes across the Mediterranean were making that ancient world one. The greatest question of that day was to the character of this new world that was coming into being. Rome stood at the center and declared

that this new world would be a world of business under the protection and direction of an Empire. This Roman Empire was the greatest effort of antiquity and probably the greatest political effort in the whole history of man. From the Imperial Palace at Rome went forth edicts from the wisest of statesmen, trying to bring into harmony the many races that composed that vast Empire. Roman consuls of great ability and often of unimpeachable honesty ruled the nations of the world and sought to create a world-unity. No political structure was ever built with the wisdom and foresight that characterized that Empire. It was the unity of power, the unity of interest, the unity of politics.

"But while these statesmen labored at their task, little groups of men naming the name of Christ gathered week by week with the belief that no such world-unity could stand, and with the claims that the true unity of the sons of men was in the new kingdom, not of Rome, but of God. They were poor, despised, and persecuted, they had no power or prestige, but they claimed that the only unity that could endure was the unity which they found in their social organization, the brotherhood of the Church of Jesus Christ. In that new fellowship they welcomed Jew and Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, and there they found the new experience that they were all one in Christ Jesus. They sent out their missionaries to every land proclaiming that the new kingdom of God had come through the gift of His Son and that in the fellowship of Christ and

the brethren, Christian men of north and south and east and west were bound into a new unity, the unity of the family of God.

"The history of the first three centuries of our era is the history of the question whether the Roman system founded on power and finance could weave the peoples of the world into a unity, or whether the new order of the Christian Church could do it. You do not need to be told that Rome failed, that this greatest effort of antiquity to make the world one broke down and left the peoples in chaos. Nor do you need to be told how that unity which began in Palestine so humbly remained as the one hope of man in the Dark Ages which followed.

"Again today, as in the Mediterranean world nineteen hundred years ago, the nationalistic order of the world is passing away. Commerce and communications are obliterating the old national boundaries and are making necessary an international order. What shall the pattern of the new order be? What shall be the principle of coordination of peoples in this new world into which we are being driven? For unless we have an enduring pattern, a stable plan of social architecture, our new world will wreck itself in friction."

This is a noble Christian concept of the opportunity and obligation of religion today. The Bahá'í Cause works also to complete this universal structure begun nineteen centuries ago by the message of the Christ; and its aim, like that of the Christian

Church, is to effect the spiritualization of humanity, both individually and collectively.

4

The Bahá'í Movement is not separating people from the love of Christ; on the contrary, it is making many people believers in Christ who before were disbelievers. Thousands of Jews in different parts of the world, who have become Bahá'is, in doing so have accepted Christ as the Messiah. 'Abdu'l-Bahá in addresses in this country before Jewish synagogues, did not refrain from commenting on the lofty spiritual station of Christ, even to the displeasure of his audience.

Also, the message of Bahá'u'lláh is bringing millions of Muslims to an appreciation of and reverence for the station of Christ—a thing which the Christian missionaries have not been able to effect.

5

The Bahá'í Movement is striving, as are all religions, to bring more of a sense of the Divine, more of God-consciousness to humanity. A girl of seventeen said to her mother, who was sad because she could not afford her child beautiful clothes: "Mother, we Bahá'is are not put on earth to wear beautiful clothes; we are here to 'clothe humanity with Divinity.'"

Bahá'is are working earnestly to help bring about

that supremely felicitous day when, as Isaiah sang: "The knowledge of God shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." They are partners in the prayer of Christ: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

CHAPTER XVII

Making a Better World

RELIGION, as Bahá'ís see it, is not an artificial compulsion, an abnormal restraint upon life; nor is it a passive unreasoning submission to exigencies and events. It is something dynamic, active. It releases creative forces in the individual and attracts to the individual creative forces greater than his own personal powers.

True spirituality means the full exercise of the creative intelligence in changing and ordering one's life so as to make it harmonious and joyous. Through the aid of the scientific intellect plus guiding and stimulating forces from a super-world man becomes the ruler of his environment—organizing and administering the world about him so as to adapt it to his needs. "*Religion is in reality the cause of infinite progress,*" says 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Bahá'ís believe that the most individually important form of creative work man can indulge in is the forming of his own character and personality. This is a task which is placed in man's own hands. No one can create another's personality. This is an individual responsibility and it is the most important task of life. As man creates his higher self on the inner plane, so correspondingly will be the effects of all his efforts on the outer plane. Everything

flows from the center. We must *be* in order to *do*.

2

Every individual, in lifting his own life up to nobler heights, finds himself inspired with a great zeal for helping to improve humanity.

In the process of human evolution from the savage satisfying only his animal wants to the modern with his multitudinous desires, "there at last came the selfless and compassionate man who pitied the hungry and the maimed and the heavily burdened, and dreamed a splendid dream—that he might collaborate with God in creating a world free of misery and wrong and injustice."³

What enormous possibilities await this loftiest of tasks, the building of a more perfect world! Humanity has only for a brief two centuries been conscious of itself as a struggling, evolving society. It has only within this brief span of its existence come to envision and assume conscious goals of perfection toward which to strive. Today the conscience of men the world over is being aroused as never before to the urgent need of creating a new world order which shall establish security and happiness for the individual. In this titanic effort where man's ordinary intelligence stands baffled and halting, the Bahá'is seek to utilize all the creative power which religion has to give. The mere force of the intellect will never suffice to remake the world, they

³ Robert Quillen.

say. There is needed the heart of charity and the soul of vision.

3

Leading thinkers and writers of the world, in giving earnest attention to the great problem of how to achieve an ideal organization of humanity, realize the part which altruism must play in this.

"To the ears of many 'idealism' means a lot of empty words," says Heywood Broun, "an effort to achieve the impossible at some very distant date. But it is better than that. Several of the wisest of economists can offer us little counsel to improve the tangled snarl of international relationships except to suggest that we might work our way out if there were a greater amount of goodwill floating around in the world. The road to adjustment lies plainly ahead of us but is blocked by fear, hatred, petty nationalism, and personal greed. I mean very literally that the wise men need not only all their wisdom but also *the fellowship of love*."

"The problem of social injustice will be a problem for many years to come," says Frank Howard. "We have today, as ever, need of prophets of the social gospel, of those with a genuine desire to lighten the burdens of the race. There must be an application of the teachings of religion to industry. It is well enough to say no business can be a charitable institution, and that is true. It is easy to point out that if a business is to survive it must make

money. None the less, the need of the humanitarian spirit in industry remains."

H. G. Wells—writer of Utopias and for years an earnest searcher for ways in which to perfect the organization of humanity—states: "Either we must make peace throughout the world, make one world State, one world-pax, with one money, one police, one speech, one brotherhood—however hard that task may seem—or we must prepare to live with the voice of a stranger in our ears, with the eyes of a stranger in our homes, with the knife of a stranger always at our throats, in fear and danger of death. We are confronted with two facts—one bad and one good. The first is that acts of war have become hideously immediate and far-reaching. The second is that the whole round world can be brought together into one brotherhood, one communion, one close-knit, freely communicating citizenship far more easily today than was possible with even such a little country as England a century ago."

4

The formulation of principles of organization for all humanity and the guidance of humanity into such a world order is too immense a task for any human personality. It requires a super-power. The function of the individual is to become a channel for a Divine Force and a Divine Plan which would remake this planet into a better and happier home for man. It is through the power of the Holy

Spirit—the Light which guided the Prophets and shone forth from them—that the Bahá'is seek to operate.

“When you breathe forth the breath of the Holy Spirit from your hearts into the world, commerce and politics will take care of themselves in perfect harmony. All arts and sciences will become revealed, and the knowledge of God will be manifested. It is not your work but that of the Holy Spirit which you breathe forth through the Word. This is a fundamental truth.”⁴

Human power cannot suffice to reconstruct the world, because there is implied in the essential economic and political structure of mankind an *infinite variety of incalculable circumstances*. The way out must be shown by a Power higher than ourselves. To the light of his intellect man must add the Light of the Spirit, says ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

“The light of the intellect enables us to understand and realize all that exists. But it is the divine Light alone which can give us sight for the invisible things and which enables us to see truths that will not be visible to the world for thousands of years hence. It was the divine Light which enabled the prophets to see two thousand years in advance what was going to take place. And today we see the realization of their vision. Thus it is this Light which we must strive to seek, for it is greater than any other.”⁵

⁴ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “Divine Art of Living.”

⁵ “Divine Art of Living.”

5

Bahá'is find in the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh an inspiring goal to work for. They realize their own limited powers to be totally inadequate to the task. But they work as part of a concerted movement the plan of which they believe to be perfect, and the effectiveness of which is clearly to be measured by the zeal and unity of its adherents.

Here, in the working out of a modern world religion, is a creative task fit to call out all man's powers, the Bahá'is believe. No task to which man can dedicate himself is more noble, more inspiring, more worthy of the utmost consecration and concentration than that of helping to build a better world.

Within the vast scope of this superhuman task Bahá'is claim the privilege of becoming quarriers, architects and builders—each one an artist, a creator working in the service of the Great Architect and for the progress of humanity.

6

"Bahá'is may not content themselves with the noise, the clamor, the hollowness of religious doctrine. Nay, rather, they should exemplify in every aspect of their lives the attributes and virtues that are born of God, and should arise to distinguish themselves by their goodly behavior. They should justify their claim to be Bahá'is by deeds, not by name.

"He is a true Bahá'i who strives by day and by night to progress and advance along the path of human endeavor; whose cherished desire is to live and act so as to enrich and illumine the world; whose source of inspiration is the Essence of Divine perfection; whose aim in life is to conduct himself so as to be the cause of infinite progress. Only when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of him that he is a Bahá'i.

"In this holy dispensation the crowning glory of bygone ages and cycles, faith is no mere acknowledgment of the unity of God but rather the living of a life that manifests the virtues and perfections implied in such belief.

" . . . Dedicate yourselves wholly to the service of humanity. Then will the world be turned into a paradise; then will the surface of the earth mirror forth the glory of the . . . Kingdom." ⁶

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "Bahá'i Prayers," pp. 182-183.

EPILOGUE

SO THIS IS THE COMING WORLD ORDER, AS BAHÁ'IS
CONCEIVE IT:

A WORLD united politically, religiously, culturally; and educated under a common universal curriculum.

A WORLD in which war is forever banned, and the energies of humanity are devoted solely to constructive enterprise.

A WORLD where all men are seen as brothers and differences of color, race, and nationality are no longer factors of prejudice but elements of pleasing variety in a vast cosmopolitan culture.

A WORLD where language barriers are overcome by the use of a universal auxiliary language.

A WORLD free from customs barriers and prosperously engaged in international interchange of goods.

A WORLD in which the long and bitter conflict between capital and labor is changed into effective cooperation based on profit sharing and mutuality of interests.

A WORLD where jungle-like competition in industry and business has given place to the orderly workings of a planned economic society.

A WORLD of plenty in which individual wealth is limited and poverty is abolished.

A WORLD in which science walks hand in hand with religion, and knowledge is dedicated to human progress.

A WORLD in which the business of government devolves upon the fittest administrators and the best trained experts—a working aristocracy based on democratic universal foundations.

A WORLD, above all, which knows God and seeks to follow ways of righteousness and peace.

Is this a dream world built only of desire-images?
No, it is a world toward which our planetary destiny is plainly moving. There is not an element in it, no matter how apparently idealistic, toward which social evolution and the force of events have not already shown manifest tendency. It is the type of world which modernism will inevitably produce as an alternative to planetary chaos, bankruptcy, and suicide.

It is the organized aim of Bahá'is, the world over, to speed up this evolutionary process—to accelerate the growth of favorable culture aspects in order to bring to pass this New World Order within the present century.

L'Envoi

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá Speaks)

“I exhort you to be devoted to your spiritual development. Just as you have striven along material lines and have attained to high degrees of worldly advancement, may you likewise become strengthened and proficient in the knowledge of God. May divine susceptibilities be increased and awakened; may your devotion to the heavenly kingdom become intense. May you be the recipients of the impulses of the Holy Spirit, be assisted in the world of morality and attain ideal power, so that the sublimity of the world of mankind may become apparent to you.

“This is the time for man to strive and put forth his greatest efforts in spiritual directions. Material civilization has reached an advanced plane, but now there is need of spiritual civilization. Material civilization alone cannot satisfy; it cannot meet the conditions and requirements of the present age. Its benefits are limited to the world of matter.

L'Envoi

"But there is no limitation to the spirit of man, for spirit in itself is progressive, and if the divine civilization be established the spirit of man will advance. Every developed susceptibility will increase the effectiveness of man. Discoveries of the real will become more and more possible, and the influence of divine guidance will be increasingly recognized.

"All this is conducive of the divine form of civilization. This is what is meant in the Bible by the descent of New Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem is none other than the divine civilization, and it is now ready. It is to be and shall be organized, and the oneness of humankind will be a visible fact."

Suggested Readings

For further information on the Bahá'í Faith the reader is referred to:

"Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," by J. E. Esslemont.

An authoritative and comprehensive survey of Bahá'í history and teachings as related to present religious, scientific and social conditions in Europe and America, with many quotations from the writings. Fabrikoid binding, 6/-; paper, 2/6.

Paris Talks.

A brief but comprehensive presentation of the Bahá'í message as given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, consisting of lectures given in Paris on the various phases of the movement. Paper binding, 2/-.

"The Goal of A New World Order" by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

A general letter to the Bahá'ís of the West examining the causes of world unrest, and setting forth the remedy. 2d.

"Bahá'u'lláh" by H. M. Balyuzi.

A brief biography. 6d.

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